THE SCHOLAR’S FEAST
THE ROSMAN RUBEL COLLECTION
NEW YORK | 2–8 APRIL 2021
THE SCHOLAR’S FEAST:
THE ROSMAN RUBEL COLLECTION

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2–8 APRIL 2021
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The Rosman Rubel Collection stands out as diverse and richly elegant with highlights in sculpture, textile, and ornament from across Melanesia and Polynesia to the Northwest Coast of America. Unsurprisingly, the objects that Paula and Abe chose to collect exhibit the exceptionally broad and inclusive global perspective that was such an important part of their life, their research, their publications, and, above all, their teaching.

Abe and Paula met during the 1960s at Barnard College in New York City, where they were both professors of anthropology. In partnership with Morton Klass, they forged the department’s intellectual scope and trajectory for the next twenty-five years. The great enthusiasm they brought to their collecting life mirrored the way in which they worked together academically, especially when writing their publications.

Abe and Paula began their work together by addressing potlatch along the Northwest Coast (1968), followed by a comparative examination of data culled during trips to Iran and Afghanistan (1971-72, with support from a Guggenheim Fellowship) and subsequently Papua New Guinea and New Ireland (1974).


As this catalogue attests, Paula and Abe were not only incredible scholars but also avid collectors of art from diverse geographic and cultural regions. Most notable among their many shared passions were North American Indian art, particularly Northwest Coast carvings, and Polynesian war clubs and paddles. They lived on Riverside Drive, not far from Barnard, in an apartment that served as a warm and spirited hub for fellow collectors, its walls festooned with all manner of ethnographic art.

Their true love of the cultures they studied and the art those cultures produced was evident at each and every exhibition and auction they attended over the more than twenty-five years I had the honour to know them. Each time they entered an exhibition, they appeared with enormous smiles of appreciation and wonder at the objects they were about to discover.
One of the most stunning objects in their collection, the Maori treasure box (lot 33), is a tour de force of the phenomenal talent of Maori carvers, exhibiting not one but six tiki figures carved in high relief on the lid and ends. Maori used the box to store items considered to be tapu, or sacred – encompassing articles that had come into contact with a chief’s head or neck, such as feathers, combs, and pendants. No doubt this cultural use attracted Paula and Abe as much as the actual sculpture.

Their in-depth knowledge of the cultures that produced these amazing forms always added a spirited point to any discussion about a specific object. The Tlingit Chilkat Blanket from the Northwest Coast (lot 72) similarly underlines their curiosity for objects of great symbolic value, this time expressed in textiles. Chilkat blankets were worn over the shoulders during ceremonies by high-ranking members of a house or clan. Their highly complicated motifs communicate visually the original wearer’s house or clan identity dissected into a multitude of abstracted, flat forms.

Together, Abe and Paula loved the art, the discussion, the teaching, the trading, the research, and the complex meanings. All of this is conveyed in the quality and diversity of their magnificent collection.

Jean G. Fritts
London
March 2021
HEAD OF A MULTI-BARBED SPEAR, FIJI

*moto*

Length: 56 ¾ in (144.1 cm)

**PROVENANCE**

Galerie Lemaire, Amsterdam

Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York, acquired from the above in 1983

The unadorned shaft of this spear, or moto, has been cut, leaving one’s attention focussed on the elaborately carved head, which is both elegant and menacing. The two forms of sharp barbs on this spear are similar in appearance but may each possess an individual significance. The barbs that point both forwards and backwards – rendering it harder to pull the spear out after being struck – resemble those of a type of spear known as moto se ni nui, or “coconut flower”. Both these barbs and the pierced openwork section of the shaft resemble the example illustrated by Fergus Clunie in his classic *Fijian Weapons and Warfare*; he notes that it is “a rare form” (Clunie, *Fijian Weapons and Warfare*, Suva, 1977, n.p., fig. 29 g, and p. 70). The barbs which point in one direction only appear to be of kaka form, a name which derives from the resemblance between the barbs and the beak of the kaka parrot (*Prosopeia tabaensis* and *Prosopeia personata*). Clunie refers to the moto kaka type as a “priest’s or chief’s spear” (Clunie, *Yalo i Viti: a Fiji Museum Catalogue*, Suva, 1986, p. 179).

$2,500-3,500
NECKLACE, FIJI
wasekaeka or waseisei

Longest tooth: 5 1/4 in (14.3 cm)
shortest tooth: 3 1/2 in (8.9 cm)
Sperm whale (Physeter macrocephalus) teeth

PROVENANCE
William Jamieson, Toronto, possibly acquired from the collection of the Niagara Falls Museum
Rainer Werner Bock, Maui
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York, acquired from the above on May 14, 2015

Dramatic necklaces such as this were much prized in Fiji in the mid-19th century. Known as wasekaeka or waseisei, the necklaces were made from cut sections of sperm whale (Physeter macrocephalus) teeth, with the elegant, sweeping curve of each individual “tusk” following the natural curve of the tooth. Hooper notes that “sawn vertically and horizontally, a large tooth could probably furnish from six to ten tusks, which were then rubbed and polished to a smooth finish.” (Hooper, Fiji: Art and Life in the Pacific, Norwich, 2016, p. 136). Like other prestige objects fashioned from whale teeth, these necklaces were probably made for the chiefly class by Tongan canoe craftsmen, and whilst exact “places of manufacture are hard to establish [...] they are very likely to have been canoe-building centres in Lau, northern Fiji and possibly Kadavu.” (ibid.). These coveted objects certainly circulated throughout the Fijian archipelago; Clunie notes that many necklaces “made their way into the highlands of eastern Viti Levu [...] mostly as a form of blackmail paid by the coastal and lowland chiefs in enlisting or subverting the dread highland mercenaries.” (Clunie, Yalo i Viti: a Fiji Museum Catalogue, Suva, 1986, p. 160).

$6,000-9,000
3

OIL DISH, FIJI

sedre ni waiwai

Length: 16 ¾ in (40.6 cm)
The underside inscribed in black ink: “Cannibal tribe
Tasmania, about 1700 AD – 35""'

PROVENANCE
Anthony Slayter-Ralph, London
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York, acquired from
the above on March 21, 1985

This leaf-shaped dish, or sedre ni waiwai, was used to
hold the scented oil with which a Fijian priest, or bete,
would anoint himself before invoking his god.

The dish’s inner surface retains the dull sheen left
by the oil, whilst elsewhere the patina is dark, rich, and
encrusted, suggesting that it was long exposed to the
oily smoke of the bure kalou, or spirit house.

$ 3,000-5,000
THROWING CLUB, FIJI
i ula tavatava
Length: 17 ½ in (44.5 cm)

PROVENANCE
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York

Throwing clubs, or i ula, were invariably made of a single piece of wood, usually an uprooted shrub. The present lot is an i ula tavatava, its name referring to the form of its “elegant fluted head” (Clunie, Fijian Weapons and Warfare, 1977, p. 60), rather than to the characteristic zig-zag grip carving, which is also known as tavatava.

The Wesleyan missionary Thomas Williams wrote that “another weapon much used is the missile club, which is worn stuck in the girdle, sometimes in pairs, like pistols. [...] This is hurled with great precision, and used formerly to be the favourite implement of assassination.” (Williams, and Stringer, ed., Fiji and the Fijians, Vol. I: The Islands and their Inhabitants, London, 1888, p. 57).

$1,500-2,500
5
THROWING CLUB, FIJI
*i ula tavatava*
Length: 16 ½ in (41.9 cm)

PROVENANCE
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York

Like the preceding lot, this *i ula* is of the *tavatava* type, although here the form of the head more clearly retains the form of the buttress root from which the club is made.

$1,000-1,500

6
THROWING CLUB, FIJI
*i ula drisia*
Length: 15 ¼ in (38.7 cm)

PROVENANCE
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York

The *i ula drisia* form is characterised by its spherical root-stock head, as compact and heavily weighted as a cannonball and quite as deadly.

$600-800
BOWL FOR YAQONA, FIJI

tanoa

Diameter: 16 ⅜ in (41.9 cm)

PROVENANCE
Private Collection, Florida
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York, acquired from the above on March 17, 2001

Yaqona is an intoxicating drink infused from the pounded, grated, and chewed roots of the narcotic Piper methysticum plant. Historically yaqona was of great ceremonial importance, and priests, or bete, would consume the grated root “in the ancient bureau fashion, the priest kneeling to suck the liquid from a leaf-lined hole in the floor […] or an often supremely elegant dish carved from sacred vesi wood.” (Clunie, Yalo i Viti: a Fiji Museum Catalogue, Suva, 1986, p. 80).

The Tongan influence in Fiji from the late eighteenth introduced a more social yaqona ceremony, in which the chewed root was mixed in a tanoa bowl such as the present lot and then drunk with due ceremony from coconut shell cups. The tanoa would be placed so that the suspension lug on the underside of the bowl faced the most senior chief present.

$1,000-1,500
WAR CLUB, FIJI
waka vividrasa
Height: 43 in (109 cm)

PROVENANCE
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York

This classic skull smashing club is of the waka type, a form with a head that is “typified by the short length of retained tap root and the mace-like buttress roots of the uprooted sapling from which the club was made.” (Clunie, Fijian Weapons and Warfare, Suva, 1977, p. 57). The suffix vividrasa refers to the coir sinnet bindings around the shaft; this fine, plaited string, magimagi, was made by men in the evenings, as they whiled away the hours.

A similar waka vividrasa which belonged to Ratu Seru Epenisa Cakobau, the King of Fiji and vunivalu, or warlord of Bau, is in the collection of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart (inv. no. A.J.T. 60; illustrated in Ewins, Fijian Artefacts: Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery Collection, Hobart, 1982, p. 36, fig. 43, cat. no. MS428).

$1,000-1,500
This broad-bladed club is of the form known as culacula, a name which may be an allusion to the resemblance between the club’s projecting wings and serrated edges and the sharp, spiked protuberances of the culacula, a kind of sea crab (Clunie, Fijian Weapons and Warfare, Suva, 1977, p. 55). The culacula club is very closely related to the kinikini, and several early 19th century accounts refer to it specifically as a chief or priest’s club, which was carried as a symbol of rank and authority; in 1820, the Russian naval officer Fabian Gottlieb von Bellingshausen noted that “these paddles are the property only of chiefs, and are perhaps a mark of distinction.” (Debenham, ed., The Voyage of Captain Bellingshausen to the Antarctic Seas, 1819-1821, Volume II, Abingdon, 2010, p. 307).

Clunie notes that historically Fijian chiefs and priests “enjoyed a semi-divine […] status on the battlefield, being more at risk from flesh wounds incurred in arrow showers than in decidedly dangerous club combat. They advertised their status by their ornaments […] and distinctive weapons, generally being armed with a multi-pronged war spear […] or a shield-like, broad-bladed club […], both of which doubled as efficient missile parrying weapons.” (Clunie, Yalo i Viti: a Fiji Museum Catalogue, Suva, 1986, p. 103). When the moment arose for the culacula to be wielded in anger, the blow was struck by the thin edge of its blade, “[…] cutting or snapping through bone rather than simply shattering it.” (Ibid., p. 185).

The origin of the culacula and the closely related kinikini are somewhat opaque; Clunie writes that they are “said to be Tongan or Samoan in origin, but they were certainly widely used in the islands and coastal parts of Fiji […]” (Clunie, Fijian Weapons and Warfare, Suva, 1977, p. 55), whilst Mills states that, like the kolo (see lot 14), both the culacula and kinikini “appear to be of Fijian origin” (Mills, Tafanga Tongi ‘Akau: Tongan Club Carvers and Their Arts, unpublished PhD thesis, 2008, vol. 1, p. 251). Mills also notes that culacula is a Fijian name without meaning in Tongan (ibid., p. 153), although used there to refer to clubs of this form. Regardless of the form’s origin, the culacula were certainly carried by both Fijian chiefs and priests and Tongan chiefs.

Two small glyphs depicting human figures are carved on one side of the present club’s blade. Such figures are usually associated with Tonga, but the present examples appear to belong to a rare style that seems distinctly Fijian. This style of figure can be found in certain other chiefly or priestly clubs, including the magnificent culacula with 29 anthropomorphic glyphs in the collection of the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology at the University of Cambridge (acc. no. 1932.680). Karl Erik Larsson noted the distinctive character of the figures on that club, comparing them to the elongated form of the male figure in the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. (acc. no. 66A00050, USNM no. E3275-0). (Larsson, Fijian Studies, Gothenburg, 1960, p. 76); more recently, Steven Hooper has noted that the Cambridge culacula figures are quite “[…] different from those found on Tongan clubs.” (Hooper, Pacific Encounters: Art and Divinity in Polynesia, 1760-1860, London, 2006, p. 268). Clunie notes the presence of a single figure, “quite different in style to the Tongan figures […]”, on a superbly carved priest or chief’s club of siriti type (Clunie, Yalo i Viti: a Fiji Museum Catalogue, Suva, 1986, p. 184).
BEAKED BATTLE HAMMER, FIJI

totokia titobu

Length: 33 in (83.8 cm)

PROVENANCE
Private Collection, New York
Sotheby’s, New York, November 16, 1985, lot 361 (part),
consigned by the above
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York, acquired at the
above auction

Few forms of club are more renowned than the Fijian
totokia. Often referred to as a “pineapple head” club,
the elaborately carved head of the totokia is really
a very exact depiction of the fruit of the balawa, or
pandanus tree. Fergus Clunie, in his Fijian Weapons
and Warfare, notes that the totokia “was designed to
drive or ‘peck’ a neat hole through the enemy’s skull,
the weight of the bulky head being concentrated
in the point of the beak, or kedi-toki [...] according
to tradition [totokia] were particularly favoured for
murder and in skirmish warfare in thick bush [...]”
The suffix titobu indicates that the face of the club at
the base of the beak is concave or flat, as is the case
here. The present club’s shaft has been left plain, and
one’s attention is immediately drawn to the beautifully
figured wood.

$1,500-2,500
11
MULTI-BARBED SPEAR, FIJI

Moto

Length: 113 ¾ in (288.9 cm)
The shaft with an old paper label inscribed in black ink: “From Fiji Island”

PROVENANCE
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York

This intact fighting spear has the cone-like head sections of the tikau, a popular form of fighting spear, together with barbs that resemble the kaka, or parrot beak-like form of lot 1.

$3,000-5,000
SPURRED CLUB, FIJI
sali

Length: 38 ¼ in (97.2 cm)

PROVENANCE
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York

Hooper notes that the “larger, knob-like designs on the cheeks” distinguish the spurred sali from the very closely related cali. (Hooper, Fiji: Art and Life in the Pacific, Norwich, 2016, p. 257). Both types, which were much used in dancing, are distinguished from the gata type by the pronounced size of their spur or crest. Clunie notes that the name appears to derive from the “clawed sali flower of one of the wild banana-like plants [...] which grown in the Fiji bush.” (Clunie, Fijian Weapons and Warfare, Suva, 1977, p. 54).

$ 700-1,000
the beginning of the 19th century, recounts an incident
William Mariner, who lived in Tonga as a young man at
marshalled this precious resource with great care.
were the preserve of the 'eiki, or chiefly class, who
had enormous prestige in Fiji and Tonga, and they

Their Arts
mana, or spiritual power
containing, and indicating
may be seen as a
tata
and matting. As Mills notes,
other forms of wrapping, such as tattooing, barkcloth,
kupesi
that served as protective surface marking in
tata
on clubs such as this and the
motifs, or
, of
kupesi

There is a possible connection between the decorative
had great metaphysical importance in Tongan culture.
wrapped in some richly decorated textile. Wrapping
had great metaphysical importance in Tongan culture.
There is a possible connection between the decorative
motifs, or
, of
tata

The surface of the present club is inlaid with five
segments of cut sperm whale teeth, or lei. These teeth
had enormous prestige in Fiji and Tonga, and they
were the preserve of the 'eiki, or chiefly class, who
marshalled this precious resource with great care.
William Mariner, who lived in Tonga as a young man at
the beginning of the 19th century, recounts an incident
from the life of his protector, the great chief Finau
Ulukalala II, or Finau Fangupo, which illustrates the
value and 'eiki status of whale teeth. Having heard that
a whale had been beached off a small island inhabited
solely by a commoner and his wife, Finau Fangupo
“immediately sailed for this place, and finding the
tooth taken from the whale, questioned the man [...]
who] defended his innocence on the plea that teeth
would be of no use to him since every chief who could
afford to give their value would question his right to
them, and take them from him [...]; for the same reason,
he could not wear them. Not satisfied with this plea
 [...Finau Fangupo] ordered him to be immediately
dispatched with a club” (Mariner and Martin, An
Account of the Natives of the Tonga Islands, London,
The inlays were made by tufunga fono lei, craftsmen who specialised in cutting and carving
precious whale teeth into a range of prestige objects.
A club could be inlaid with fono lei at various points in
its life. Some inlays were placed at the moment of
the club’s creation, “piped around” by the tufunga
tata, who created the carved tata, whilst others, as is
the case here, were added later and “cut through and
obscure” the tata (Mills, Tufunga Tongi ‘Akau: Tongan
Club Carvers and Their Arts, unpublished PhD thesis,
teeth suggests, the embellishment of clubs with fono lei
was historically the preserve of the ‘eiki. Furthermore,
Mariner notes that “they only ornament those clubs
which are considered good on account of their form [...]
or which have done much execution [...]” (Mariner and
Martin, An Account of the Natives of the Tonga Islands,
Here a radiating star, or sun, is set into the top of
the head, whilst the body of the club is adorned with
an abstract depiction of a bird, a crescent moon, and
three circles. These inlays all carry their own meaning.
With its abstract beak, wings, and broad tail-feathers,
the bird appears to be caught soaring in flight. It
represents a pigeon, or lape (Ducula pacifica), a bird
that was the prerogative of the ‘eiki. Pigeon snaring
was historically a popular pursuit amongst the ‘eiki,
and it was also a metaphor for conquest. Depicted as a
slender crescent, the moon, or mahina, was associated
with Hina, the Tongan goddess of beauty. The three
circles of ivory may depict Venus, or tapukitea; in tata,
such circles are usually carved next to the crescent
moon, but in inlaid clubs such as this, the circle often
appears on its own, the evening star shining out against
the dark patina of the wood.
PROVENANCE
Mark Eglinton, New York
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York, acquired from the above

The Fijian term *kolo* was used in Tonga to refer to the throwing clubs that were generally referred to as *i ula* in Fiji (see lots 4, 5, and 6). This name, which has no meaning in Tongan, is one of several indications that throwing clubs spread from Fiji to Tonga and Samoa, where they were known as ‘olo. Whilst many Tongan *kolo* are almost, if not wholly, indistinguishable from Fijian *i ula*, there is a small corpus of distinctly Tongan throwing clubs, such as the present lot, that pursue the greater refinement and symmetry of form, which is characteristic of Tongan art.

Here six shield-like bosses or masks emerge in high relief from a head that is almost spherical. Below each face or boss, a fine rib runs down to the raised collar. The bosses bear an immediate and unmistakable resemblance to the faces of the great Goddess sculptures created in the islands of the Ha’apai group.

Two very similar clubs from the collection of W. O. Oldman, the great English dealer and collector, are in the collection of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington (reg. nos. OL000518/1 and OL000518/2; the former on loan to the Auckland War Memorial Museum Tamaki Paenga Hira. Both illustrated in Oldman, *The Oldman Collection of Polynesian Artifacts*, Auckland, 2004, pl. 51, cat. nos. 518a, and 518b). Like the present lot, the second Oldman club has a lug which he describes as being “like those on Samoan clubs [...]” (ibid., p. 32).

$2,000-3,000
CLUB, TONGA OR SAMOA
apa'apai or uatogi

Length: 50 ¼ in (127.6 cm)
The shaft with two incised inscriptions: “M [or H] P” and “1773”

PROVENANCE
William Hart, reportedly acquired at auction in England in the 1960s
Rainer Werner Bock, Maui
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York, acquired from the above on May 4, 2016

$ 10,000-15,000

One side of the handle of this intriguing club is incised with the date “1773”, the other with initials that can be read as either “M. P.” or “H. P.” The Rosman Rubels acquired it in the belief that the initials were those of Henry Pryor (1736 – ?), an Able Seaman on HMS Adventure, the companion vessel to HMS Resolution during Cook’s second voyage (1772 – 1775). Pryor was the only man on the voyage with initials to correspond to the “H. P.”; no man bore the initials “M. P.”. It is unclear whether the inscriptions are genuine or if they are opportunistic additions made at a later date.

Cook voyage objects with documentation of any sort are scarce, and it would be surprising if a humble Able Seaman (even if he “had his letters”) were the only member of the crew to have the foresight to inscribe the year and his initials on a souvenir of the voyage. Stylistic similarity to clubs documented as having been collected in Tonga during Cook’s second and third voyages is not, on its own, sufficient to confirm a Cook voyage attribution, but it is interesting to note certain similarities between such clubs and the present example. Kaeppler remarks that “Tongan clubs were the most numerous type of artifacts collected on Cook’s voyages [...]. Tongan clubs of this type, but [...] collar distribution and the style of surface incision are the best guides.” (Kaeppler, “Artificial Curiosities”:

The decoration of the present club may be its most distinctive feature, particularly two zones that appear to be of Samoan design (Cook did not visit Samoa but, as Mills notes, “there are Fijian and Samoan clubs collected by [Europeans] in Tonga well before 1800.” Mills, Tufunga Tongi ‘Akau: Tongan Club Carvers and Their Arts, unpublished PhD thesis, 2008, p. 397).

The Samoan designs are the patterns of shallow dots, some roughly circular and some roughly triangular, gouged into the surface of the wood above the topmost ribbed collar and in a chevron-like pattern immediately above the bottom-most collar. Discussing apa‘apai (known in Samoa as uatogi, or in some texts lapalapa), Mills notes that “it is not always easy to differentiate between Samoan and Tongan clubs of this type, but [...] collar distribution and the style of surface incision are the best guides.” (Mills, “‘Akau Tua: Contextualising Tongan War-Clubs”, Journal of the Polynesian Society, Vol. 118, No. 1, March, 2009, p. 24).

The remaining incised decoration is composed of two large zones of tata, the form of engraved carving found on many Tongan clubs. Amongst documented Cook voyage clubs there is no example that exactly parallels the Samoan style design of the present club. Somewhat similar – but more deeply gouged and circular – marks can be seen on a Cook voyage club, of pakipaki type, in the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter (acc. no. E1217), and on a tautau, or food hook, now in the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington (reg. no. FE000330). This object also appears to have come from one of Cook’s voyages; see Kaeppler, “Cook Voyage Provenance of the ‘Artificial Curiosities’ of Bullock’s Museum”, Man, N.S., Vol. 9, No. 1, March, 1974, p. 79). Expanding the field beyond Cook voyage objects reveals other old clubs that are more closely comparable; these include a club, from either Samoa or Rotuma, in the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology at the University of Cambridge (acc. no. 1918.214.75). It is adorned with similar triangular marks, as is a Samoan club of the same type (but an entirely different shape) once in the collection of W. O. Oldman and now in the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington (reg. no. OL000215.5/8).
HEADREST, TONGA

kali laloni

Length: 21 in (55.3 cm)

PROVENANCE
Kevin Conru, Brussels
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York, acquired from
the above on May 18, 2007

In Tonga, the head was the most tapu, or sacred part
of the body, and in sleep it was appropriate to rest
one's head on a carefully made headrest, or kali. There
are several forms of kali, all of which demonstrate the
elegance and economy of form characteristic of Tongan
sculpture. This graceful headrest is of the kali laloni
type, which was “used mainly by Tongan chiefs.” (St
Cartmail, The Art of Tonga: Ko e ngaahi ‘aati ‘o Tonga,
Honolulu, 1997, p. 54).

The legs, which end in the square feet
characteristic of most kali laloni, are carved separately
from the curved pillow. The different parts of the
headrest are artfully joined; two triangular wedges
carved on the underside of the pillow slot neatly into
“v” shaped cuts at the top of each pair of legs. The
different parts are then secured with fiber cords, or
kafa, which are visible only on the underside of the
object, as the simple elegance of the headrest’s form is
matched by that of its construction.

$2,000-3,000
BARK CLOTH, FUTUNA

Skillfully crafted uniquely by women, bark cloths (often referred to by the Polynesian word *tapa*) exist in many different varieties and designs. Such cloths are typically made from the soft, inner bark of the Mulberry tree. Each sheet is pounded and felted, then glued together, sometimes creating very long cloths, such as the following lot pictured in this catalogue (Lot 18). Because these objects were both ceremonial and common everyday items, designs and sizes could vary immensely. Smaller textiles were used as garments, while longer cloths were displayed or exchanged during ceremonies such as marriages or funerals. Bark cloths still remain central to ritual life in Polynesia, particularly in areas such as Tonga, Fiji, and Samoa.
BARK CLOTH, FUTUNA

Length: 176 in (447 cm); Width: 25 ½ in (64.8 cm)

PROVENANCE
Private Collection, Nouméa, New Caledonia, reportedly acquired in Futuna in the 19th century and then by family descent
Private Collection, Dallas, acquired from the above in 1995
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York, acquired from the above on May 30, 2010

$ 3,000-5,000
The richly decorated ceremonial instruments in the form of a paddle from the Austral Islands are inspired by the functional tools of maritime travel, which are imbued with meaning for their seafaring creators. Likely used as wands during ceremonial dances, the two Austral paddles from the Rosman-Rubel collection come from the small island of Raivavae and are particularly distinguished by their tightly controlled and finely carved decoration. Lot 19 features an elegant pommel ringed by abstracted faces and bodies depicting a combination of human and animal characteristics, while lot 20 features a register of stacked figures in a rectangular relief.
Like the preceding lots, the present large ladle-form ceremonial instrument bears the distinctive and ornate continuous relief carving of Austral Island tradition, in a pattern sometimes referred to as “shark-tooth” design, both for the repeated pointed triangles and for the tool that was likely first used to incise these patterns. The pommel features a wide ring of projecting abstract faces, each surmounted by two projecting cylinders that resemble eyes but may also refer to plaited headdress elements. These emerge from abstract bodies which suggest the motion of dance.

While the more numerous paddles refer to a function for which they were not likely used, it is possible that the ceremonial ladles were in fact used to dispense food in an important ceremonial context. Phelps notes that an example of such a ladle in The British Museum (inv. no. Oc.5502), collected by a member of the London Missionary Society, “has the accompanying legend: ‘ladle for serving out of the Poi Haari or coconut pudding to the royal party in the king’s house.’” (Phelps, Art and Artifacts of the Pacific, Africa, and the Americas: The James Hooper Collection, London, 1976, p. 144).

The precise meaning of the symbols in sacred Austral Island objects is not well understood, but Henry Usher Hall remarked that Austral Islanders “[...] had at their disposal, in the best period of their art, no more efficient tools than they could fashion of stone and shell and the teeth of the [shark] [...] If we cannot read the tale, we can at least admire the piety and skill of the patient recorder.” (Hall, “Woodcarvings of the Austral Islands”, The Museum Journal, Vol. XII, No. 3, 1921, p. 199).

$ 12,000-18,000
WAR CLUB, MARQUESAS ISLANDS
‘u’u

Height: 58 in (147.3 cm)
The crossbar ends restored

PROVENANCE
Private Collection
Sotheby’s, London, December 3, 1984, lot 61, consigned by the above
Galerie Lemaire, Amsterdam
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York, acquired from the above on July 21, 1989

$ 20,000-30,000

Carol S. Ivory, the scholar of Marquesan art, notes that “warfare was an integral part of Marquesan life” (Kjellgren and Ivory, Adorning the World: Art of the Marquesas Islands, New York, 2005, p. 85), whether as the result of territorial rivalries or because of the need to obtain redress for perceived slights, insults, or humiliation. Important warriors were, therefore, amongst the most influential and high-ranking members of Marquesan society, and their most prized possession and emblem was an ‘u’u. These large, heavy, and exquisitely decorated clubs were carved from ironwood (Casuarina equisetifolia), known to the Marquesans as toa, which is also the Marquesan word for warrior. Samuel H. Elbert notes that “In Marquesan, intangibles are named for visible things [...] Heroic or manly is iron-wood tree (toa), the toughness and strength of which is proverbial.” (Elbert, “Chants and Love Songs of the Marquesas Islands, French Oceania”, The Journal of the Polynesian Society, Vol. 50, No. 198, 1941, p. 55).

continued
The purpose of the ‘u’u was to render its owner powerful and invulnerable. As a heavy war club it served this purpose in a very literal sense, but as Ivory’s remarks make clear, it unquestionably had great spiritual power too, as a vessel for ancestral mana.

The anthropologist Alfred Gell has made a similar suggestion, noting his belief that in the Marquesas Islands all imagery, whether carved or tattooed, is a vehicle for etua (gods, or deified ancestors) “in a tutelary [...] guardian mode” (Gell, cited in Hooper, Pacific Encounters: Art and Divinity in Polynesia, 1760-1860, London, 2006, p. 163). The imagery on the club does not “represent” etua, figuratively or abstractly, but rather it constitutes their protective presence within the object itself. Considering these theories, and the traditional belief in the Marquesas Islands that it was sacrilege to approach a chief or warrior from behind, it seems probable that the multiplicity of faces on an ‘u’u were intended in part to represent the all-seeing and watchful character of the ancestors. Tiny yet watchful, they ensure that a vigilant ancestor faces out in all four cardinal directions.

The great distinguishing feature of all ‘u’u is the janiform head of the club, which is covered in an array of small heads and faces. These are arranged in such a way that together they form a larger face, a sort of visual “pun”, in which the eyes and nose are made of small heads. The array of faces on an ‘u’u held many layers of meaning. First, we should note that the Marquesans held the head to be the most sacred, or tapu part of the body, as the site of a person’s mana, or spiritual power. Also important is that the Marquesans call both the face and the eyes mata, and that this word has great genealogical significance. Ivory notes that “the recitation of an individual’s genealogy was referred to as matatetau, literally ‘to count or recite (tetau) faces/eyes (mata)’ [...] and the term mata ‘enana (face/eye people) refers to one’s relatives, ancestors, or allies [...] Thus, the symbolic relationship between images of the face or eye and an individual’s ancestry – and, by extension, the sacred power of the ancestors – begins to become apparent” (Kjellgren and Ivory, ibid., p. 33).

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23

PADDLE, MARQUESAS ISLANDS

hoe or tohua

length: 53 in (134.6 cm)

PROVENANCE

Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York

The elegant, swooping form of this paddle’s head seems to suggest a soaring bird with backswept wings.

$2,000-3,000
FAN, MARQUESAS ISLANDS

tahi’i (fan)
ke’e (handle)

Length: 15 ¾ in (39.1 cm); Width: 11 ¼ in (29.9 cm)

PROVENANCE
Private Collection, New Bedford, Massachusetts
Willis Henry Auctions, Rockland, Massachusetts, May 26, 2013, lot 160, consigned by the estate of the above
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York, acquired at the above auction

Tahi’i fans typically exhibit a body made from braided coconut leaves or a stiff grass with a wood or bone handle. These fibers were tightly woven around a long wooden handle, or ke’e, and sometimes colored with crushed lime or coral, which was reapplied as needed. While the earliest fans collected before the 1800s were carved with smooth handles, shortly thereafter handles on Tahi’i became more ornate.

Carved back to back, two tiki couples sit one above the other on the handle of this tahi’i. They exhibit typical features of Marquesan tiki, including large heads and deeply set eyes. There are some differences between the two sets of figures: the ears of the top couple appear to be joined, while the lower couple’s shoulders are merged. Some faint traces of lime are visible between the woven fibers of the body of the fan. The bottom of the fan handle terminates in a rounded knob.

Tahi’i fans were carried as status markers by influential, high-ranking members of Marquesan society, specifically by warriors (toa) and ritual specialists (tua’u). These fine objects were displayed at important events, such as feasts, and were a marker of elegance and taste.

$ 15,000-25,000
LIDDED BOWL, MARQUESAS ISLANDS

Length: 15 ¾ in (39 cm)
The underside of the bowl inscribed in red ink: “L.P.70.46a”, and with a printed paper label: “MATHIAS KOMOR WORKS OF ART NEW YORK”, the label inscribed in black ink: “1.187” and “Marquesas”
The underside of the lid inscribed in red ink: “L.P.70.46b”

PROVENANCE
Reportedly Linden-Museum, Stuttgart
Mathias Komor, New York (inv. no. 1.187)
Nelson A. Rockefeller, New York, acquired from the above
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (inv. no. 1979.206.1815ab), donated by the above
Sotheby’s, New York, November 14, 1980, lot 78, consigned by the above
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York, acquired at the above auction

PUBLISHED

EXHIBITED
Fine Arts Gallery of San Diego, *Dimensions of Polynesia*, October 7 - November 25, 1973

After visiting the Marquesas Islands in 1791, the French explorer and hydrographer Charles Pierre Claret Fleurieu described the decorated bowls he saw as “various wooden vessels which they make use of for their food, and on which they amuse themselves in carving or engraving figures of men, fishes, and birds” (Kjellgren and Ivory, *Adorning the World: Art of the Marquesas Islands*, New York, 2005, p. 109). The present lot represents a later 19th century development of this tradition, and exhibits what looks at first to be repeated geometric patterns. Upon closer examination, however, one may note what looks to be a stylized lizard, its arms and legs extended into rectangular spirals. Lot 26, however, is covered in more immediately recognizable motifs, such as tikī faces with gaping mouths. The most common types of wood used to make Marquesan bowls were *tou* (false ebony), *temanu*, and *mi’o* (Pacific rosewood).

$ 4,000-6,000
BOWL, MARQUESAS ISLANDS

ipu ehi

Height: 6 ½ in (16.5 cm)

PROVENANCE
Jean-Pierre Laprugne, Paris
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York, acquired from the above on July 15, 1983

$ 3,000-5,000
STILT STEP, MARQUESAS ISLANDS

.tapuvae

Height: 13 ½ in (33 cm)

PROVENANCE
Galerie Lemaire, Amsterdam
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York, acquired from the above on September 28, 1984

This beautiful stilt step (tapuvae) bears a solemnly seated caryatid tikī with shallow incisions, reminiscent of tattoos. Such pieces were typically crafted from ironwood and are one of the most distinctive Marquesan art forms. Marquesan men typically performed on stilts during ritual ceremonies, races, mock battles, and other competitions. Footrests such as this one were tied to stilts (which were made from light wood) two to three feet from the bottom. During these performances, most of which took place in public spaces, contestants stood on poles up to seven feet high and attempted to dislodge each other.

Because of their portability and desirable decorative features, stilt steps were of great interest to early European and American visitors.

$7,000-10,000
LEI NIHO PALAOA

Length of hook: 4 ¼ in (10.8 cm)
Length overall: 14 in (35.6 cm)
Sperm whale (Physeter macrocephalus) tooth

PROVENANCE
Morris J. Pinto, Paris
Sotheby’s, London, African, Oceanic and Pre-Columbian Art from the Pinto Collection, May 9, 1977, lot 8
Merton D. Simpson, New York, acquired at the above auction
Christie’s, London, October 24, 1978, lot 140, consigned by the above
Nelly Van den Abbeele, Brussels, acquired at the above auction
Christie’s, Amsterdam, Important Oceanic Art from the Collection of Mrs. Nelly Van den Abbeele, December 6, 1999, lot 558
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York

PUBLISHED
Paul and Francine de Dekker, Ta’aroa. L’univers polynésien, Brussels, 1982, p. 173, cat. no. 135 (with incorrect provenance)

EXHIBITED
Passage 44, Brussels, Ta’aroa. L’univers polynésien, February 26 - April 18, 1982

Lei niho palaoa are composed of cords of intricately woven human hair; each strand can include between 50 to 100 hairs. A smoothly carved whalebone pendant hangs elegantly from the body of the necklace. This particular piece of whalebone exhibits natural striations and marks on its cream-colored surface. The upward curve of the whalebone pendant evokes a stylized tongue. Worn by chiefs, the necklace symbolized the importance of oratory abilities for the success of a leader, while also highlighting the wearer’s divine genealogy.

Both the use of whalebone and human hair indicate that these objects were valuable, powerful, and prestigious. Whalebone was extremely rare in the eighteenth century. When the material became more readily available in the nineteenth century due to the rise of whaling and other trade practices, lei niho palaoa became more ubiquitous. The use of hair is symbolically important, as a person’s mana (or power) was concentrated in the head and hair. After cutting one’s hair as a sign of respect during mourning rituals, the hair was braided for these objects, adding to the symbolic significance of such pieces.
Diameter: 15 ½ in (39.4 cm)

PROVENANCE
Christopher B. Hemmeter, Honolulu, acquired in the 1980s
Sotheby’s, New York, November 14, 1995, lot 138, consigned by the above
Private Collection, Vermont, acquired at the above sale
Jeff Hobbs, Wellington
Mark Eglinton, New York
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York, acquired from the above on December 15, 2006

PUBLISHED

$ 12,000-18,000

FEAST BOWL, HAWAIIAN ISLANDS
umeke la’au pakaka

Pakaka (feast bowls), also known as Calabash, caught the attention of western travelers to the Hawaiian Islands as early as the late eighteenth century. The elegant and balanced shape and proportions of these bowls is directly inspired by forms found in nature, namely the rounded shape of the gourd. Highly polished on the exterior, the earliest Hawaiian bowls were carved with coral and stone, until these tools were replaced by iron ones at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Their sheen was maintained by rubbing nut oil on the surface.

Initially, these bowls were used only by elite members of society, but around the time when iron tools were introduced, they became widely used receptacles for poi or meat. They remained nonetheless valued objects, passed down from generation to generation, symbols of community and the continuance of family histories. Their importance as prized objects meant that they were repaired and maintained as needed with butterfly wooden pegs, as seen in this and the subsequent lot, which were viewed as marks of beauty and age.
30

BOWL, HAWAIIAN ISLANDS

umeke la‘au pakaka

Diameter: 14 ½ in (36.8 cm)

PROVENANCE
Joy Wemyss, Farmington, Connecticut
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York, acquired from the above on June 13, 1981

$ 3,000-5,000
The art of Easter Island (Rapa Nui) occupies a singular position in world culture. One of the most remote inhabited locations on earth, this volcanic island was home to a culture which developed in isolation for a period of about a thousand years. Easter Island's enigmatic civilization was already in severe decline by the time Europeans arrived in the 18th century, but is known to the world through its enduring sculpture. While the monumental stone figures (moai) are perhaps the best-known images of all Oceanic art, the wood sculptures of Easter Island are not popularly known and until recently have been little-studied.

Their portable nature, however, allowed them to find their way into European collections where they exerted a powerful influence on European artists from the 1870s to the 1930s. Recent studies have vastly enhanced our understanding of this lost people, and although its mysteries remain, the Easter Islanders' sculptural accomplishments are today acknowledged as some of the finest in human history.

The corpus of classical wood sculptures from Easter Island falls under the general term of moai miro (figures of wood) and includes several classic types: moai kava kava, male human figures of emaciated
appearance; moai papa, female human figures; moai tangata, a more naturalistic male figure depicted with flesh; tangata manu, a bird-man hybrid; and the type of the present figure, moko, which melds the attributes of a lizard, a man, and sometimes a bird. The moko is perhaps the most graceful of these figures, usually with a curving silhouette, inspired by the form of a skink, moko uri uri (Cryptoblepharus pociclopleurus paschalis), native to Easter Island, stylized in elegant abstract scrolls of relief carving, and in the present example exhibiting the same external spine and ribs as those seen in the moai kavakava figures, as well as human hands held under the chin, and human-like legs and hips which also recall the human moai miro types. The present example terminates in a smooth handle emerging between the feet of the figure, suggesting that in its original ritual context it may have been held like a sceptre or club.

In general terms, the wood sculpture of Rapa Nui contains highly complex metaphors for the relationships between humans and the natural world, as well as those between the physical world and the worlds of dreams, spirits, and ancestors. The elegant and sculpturally poetic fusion of human and animal forms suggests a highly sophisticated and imaginative pantheon of meanings, although following the complete destruction of classical Rapa Nui culture in the 19th century, most of this body of cultural knowledge can never be recovered. Kjellgren (Splendid Isolation: Art of Easter Island, New York 2001, pp. 54-55) notes:

“Lizardman images on Easter Island appear to have been intimately associated with the built environment and were involved in the creation, defense, and destruction of dwellings and ceremonial structures. During rites associated with the completion of important houses, possibly those of chiefs, wood lizardmen were placed on either side of the entrance. The ariki mau and a high priest then entered the house and ate a ceremonial first meal. These lizardman images might have protected the threshold from supernatural foes; larger examples were reputedly used as clubs to defend the entrance against human enemies.”

The European name for Rapa Nui was given for the day of its discovery by the Dutch explorer Jacob Roggeveen, on Easter Sunday, 1722. Reports from this brief visit witness a treeless island and a civilization in decline, though interestingly they note only standing moai, as did the accounts of other early visitors. By the time of Captain James Cook’s famous arrival at the island in 1774, the decline had hastened and many of the moai had been toppled in internal conflicts among the islanders. The presence of the monumental upright stone figures was particularly confounding to European observers because the inhabitants appeared to possess no means of erecting them. We now understand that at the height of the culture, trees were abundant on the island; these provided the mechanical material for the erection of the moai, as well as the medium for a sophisticated wood carving tradition. The reasons for the deforestation, like many aspects of Easter Island history, are uncertain; it was perhaps the result of hubristic overuse in construction of the moai, or the demands of overpopulation and competition on a tiny island.

Although a South American origin has been proposed, today scholars agree that the ancestors who settled Easter Island represented the easternmost reach of the Austronesian migrations, as confirmed by the resemblance of the language and culture of Easter Island to those of other Polynesian peoples, as well as comparative genetic tests on early human remains. The archeological record shows that arrival of humans at Easter Island likely occurred around 600-800 AD, making it the latest island in Polynesia to be populated. The stone moai probably date from between 1100 and the mid-1600s AD, and the population of Easter Island peaked between about 7000 and 9000 people around the mid-1600s. Following European contact, the island was besieged with epidemics, deportations, and slave raids. By the 1860s the tiny population that remained had been entirely converted to Christianity, signaling the complete collapse of the traditional system of belief and erasing almost all knowledge of classical Rapa Nui culture.
MAORI PENDANT, NEW ZEALAND

hei tiki

Height: 4 ¼ in (10.8 cm)

PROVENANCE
Robert Hales, London
Kevin Conru, London, presumably acquired from the above
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York, acquired from the above on February 1, 2001

The hei tiki pictured here exhibits the deep, fluctuating color of greenstone, or pounamu, typical of these pendants. Hei signifies pendant, and tiki refers to the human form of these objects, although exactly what these valued items represent remains unknown. This anthropomorphic figure tilts its head to the left and holds its hands on its hips. Experiencing a tiki is just as much tactile as it is visual, with its smooth surface and curved features.

These pendants were heirlooms that represented the wearer's lineage and were believed to possess mystical qualities. They were passed down through the generations and in this way gained ancestral mana. Throughout history, there have been accounts of both women and men wearing these treasured objects; in the late 1700s, James Cook reportedly observed mostly men wearing tiki, while by the late 1800s women also owned these treasured items, keeping these pendants close for protection especially during pregnancy and childbirth.

$ 20,000-30,000
MAORI TREASURE BOX, NEW ZEALAND

waka huia

18 in (45.7 cm)

PROVENANCE
Private Collection
Christie’s, London, June 17, 1980, lot 213, consigned by the above
Pierre Bovis, San Diego, reportedly acquired from Robert Duperrier, Paris
Kevin Conru, Brussels, acquired from the above
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York, acquired from the above on October 17, 2001

PUBLISHED

$40,000-60,000
The term *waka huia*, or treasure box, refers to the oval, canoe-shaped receptacles such as this one which Maori used to hold treasured feathers (specifically *huia*, feathers from an extinct New Zealand bird called *Heteralocha acutirostris*) and items of personal adornment owned by high-ranking members of society, including *hei tiki* (see lot 32). Ornaments and their containers took on mana (prestige, or spiritual power) and the tapu (sacred) power of their owners with each use. When not in use, these ornaments were placed in the box and hung from the ceiling of a whare (house or dwelling) for safekeeping.

Because these boxes were created with the intention of being viewed from below, they have been ornately decorated on the undersides. The bottom of this *waka huia* is decorated with two intricately designed figures that gaze down at the viewer with their iridescent shell eyes. The central portion of the underside bears a complex geometric pattern of alternating vertical, horizontal, and curvilinear motifs. Four additional figures, likely depicting ancestors, appear on the lid of the box, one couple on each end. The couples merge into each other with arched bodies and sinuous curves, bearing wheku faces: tongues out and eyes wide. This treasure box still shows remnants of kokowai, the red ochre pigment that was regularly reapplied to the surface during use.
MAORI LONG CLUB, NEW ZEALAND
taiaha

Length: 62 ¼ in (158.1 cm)
The handle inscribed in yellow ink: “New Zealand [illegible]
Lawrence 1898”
The shaft broken and with a 19th-century repair

PROVENANCE
George Fabian Lawrence (better known as “Stoney Jack”),
London
General Augustus Henry Lane Fox Pitt-Rivers, Rushmore,
Dorset, acquired from the above in 1898
Alexander Lane Fox Pitt-Rivers, Rushmore, Dorset, by
descent from the above by 1900
Captain George Pitt-Rivers, The Manor, Hinton St Mary,
Dorset, by descent from the above by 1927
Stella Edith Lansdale (Pitt-Rivers), London and Ganetoult, by
descent from the above by 1966
Sotheby’s, London, July 15, 1975, lot 91, consigned by the
above
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York

PUBLISHED
General Augustus Henry Lane Fox Pitt-Rivers, Catalogues of
his Collections, 1862-1898, Vol. 8, p. 2227

EXHIBITED
The Pitt-Rivers Museum, Farnham, Dorset, 1898 - circa 1965

The taiaha was the most widely favored of the three
types of two-handed long clubs used by Maori. The
pointed end is in the form of a carved tongue sticking
out from an open mouth. This gesture was “a ritualized
challenge given by Maori warriors, and thus the form
of the weapon is connected to one of its aggressive
functions” (Hooper, Pacific Encounters: Art and

$ 4,000-6,000
MAORI LONG CLUB, NEW ZEALAND
taihā

Length: 72 ¾ in (184.8 cm)
The handle inscribed in white ink with Hooper inventory number: “H.243”

PROVENANCE
James T. Hooper, Arundel, Sussex
Christie’s, London, Hawaiian and Maori Art from the James Hooper Collection, June 21, 1977, lot 45 (part lot)
Julian and Barbara Harding, Cambridge
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York, acquired from the above on August 19, 1980

PUBLISHED

$ 3,000-5,000
MAORI LONG-HANDED HATCHET, NEW ZEALAND

*toki kakauroa*

Length: 56 in (142 cm)
The handle inscribed in white ink with Hooper inventory number: "H.262"

**PROVENANCE**

James T. Hooper, Arundel, Sussex
Christie’s, London: Hawaiian and Maori Art from the James Hooper Collection, June 21, 1977, lot 23
Lynda Ridgway Cunningham, New York, acquired at the above auction
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York, acquired from the above on January 22, 1985

**PUBLISHED**


The toki kakauroa, or long-handled axe, had no precedent in Maori *mau rakau*, the skilled use of weapons. Like its short-handled counterpart, the *patiti*, it arose from the introduction of trade-axe heads in the 19th century. These triangular axe-heads, or *toki*, often ground down to make them lighter, were attached to a long-handled, or *kakauroa* shaft, adapting that aspect of the *taiaha* and *tewhatewha* and creating a new weapon with a more obviously sinister edge.

$2,000-3,000
MAORI PADDLE, NEW ZEALAND

hoe

Length: 74 ¼ in (188.6 cm)
The head of the figure missing

PROVENANCE
Christie’s, London, April 4, 1989, lot 198
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York, acquired at the above auction

Maori paddles, called hoe or hirau, have a distinctive, slender quality. Here the flat blade of the paddle contrasts with the sinuous, undulating form of the handle, which terminates in an acrobatic female figure. The figure's head has been lost, seemingly long ago, and a face crudely engraved in its place by a former owner whose hand was less practised and sure than that of the Maori tohunga who first created this hoe.

$1,500-2,500
The tewhatewha is a weapon of exceptional elegance, with a gracefully curved shaft that widens into a broad, axe-like head. In battle the tewhatewha was used for signalling as well as fighting, with the large head making the club visible at some distance.

The blow of the tewhatewha was struck not with the blade-like head but with the flat back edge, the broad head adding momentum.

There is a small hole at the lower edge of the head, which corresponds with Te Rangi Hiroa's observation that "a bunch of split pigeon or hawk feathers was hung from a perforation near the lower edge [...] it is said that in combat the quivering of the blade and the feathers had a useful purpose in confusing the enemy." (Te Rangi Hiroa, The Coming of the Maori, Wellington, 1949, p. 277).

$ 3,000-5,000
39

MAORI BUGLE-FLUTE, NEW ZEALAND

putorino

Length: 17 ¼ in (43.5 cm)
The front inscribed in white ink: “WEB COLL 1530” the reverse with a printed label: “RATTON PARIS”

PROVENANCE
Kenneth Athol Webster, London (inv. no. 1530)
Charles Ratton, Paris, presumably acquired from the above
Mark Blackburn, Honolulu
Anthony J. P. Meyer, Paris
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York, acquired from the above on November 28, 2000

$ 50,000-70,000
This *putorino* is finely decorated, shaped from a solid piece of wood that is split lengthwise, hollowed out, and tightly wound together with bindings. A *whetu* face with a gaping mouth frames the center hole between two groupings of fiber cords. The bindings, which were traditionally made of flax in northern and western areas of the North Island and with the roots of the *kiekie* plant in central and eastern areas, are evenly spaced out along the length of the instrument and are joined together on the back.

As marked on the piece itself, this *putorino* was once in the collection of Kenneth Athol Webster (1906-1967). Over the course of the first half of the twentieth century, Webster amassed an impressive collection of Maori art as well as an important collection of New Zealand related manuscripts, books, prints, and ephemera, for which he had a special passion. A great lover of Oceanic art, he strived to encourage general appreciation and knowledge of this material. In a 1951 article in *Apollo* entitled “Polynesian Art,” he wrote:

“The judgement of future centuries may be that we, who have striven so long to mimic the visible world of nature in our artistic portrayals, are, at best, but stuffy imitators, and that those who took darkness and light, space and time, and fashioned from them the limitless imaginings of the mind are the true portrayers of man’s thoughts in visible and tangible form” (quoted in Waterfield and King, *Provenance: Twelve Collectors of Ethnographic Art in England 1760-1990*, Paris, 2006, p. 144).

*Putorino* are unique to Maori culture and were very highly valued. The exact playing method is unknown today, as these instruments disappeared shortly after European contact and written records describing them are scarce. Such instruments can however be played as either a bugle or a flute. The shape and sound of the *putorino* are said to have been inspired by the female case moth, whose elongated cocoon protects her before emerging to serenade potential mates.
MAORI HEAD, NEW ZEALAND
upoko whakairo

Height: 8 ¼ in (22.5 cm)

PROVENANCE
Fenton and Sons, “The Old Curiosity Shop”, London
Harry G. Beasley, Chislehurst, acquired from the above in 1919 (inv. no. 29-3 1098)
Irene M. Beasley, Brighton, by descent from the above in 1964
Mark Eglington, New York, acquired from the above
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York, acquired from the above in 2007

$ 30,000-50,000

This carved head, or upoko whakairo, was once owned by Harry Geoffrey Beasley (1881-1939), the well-known English collector. Beasley acquired the head in 1919 from Fenton and Sons, the London dealers, and recorded the acquisition in his ledger with the following description: “A wooden head of hard yew wood bearing elaborate moko. The whole is doubtless intended to be a substitute for a dried head. The work on the face is steel cut. 9 1/8 inches long. Said to be called RAHU.” (Beasley’s ledgers, Anthropology Library and Research Centre, British Museum, London).

Rahui is an important concept in Maori culture; a simple definition is that rahui is a “mark to warn people against trespassing; used in the case of tapu […]” (Williams, Dictionary of the Maori Language, Wellington, 1971, p. 321). Presumably this was how Beasley understood the term and in a rather testy letter to the Journal of the Polynesian Society, he writes that he is aware of carved heads described as “‘Taboo’ [tapu] marks, notably one in the British Museum” (Beasley, “Notes and Queries. 441, Carved Maori Artifacts”, Journal of the Polynesian Society, Vol. 38, No. 4, December, 1929, p. 291). Beasley then suggests that a head in his collection “obviously represents a portrait [..of] a mokoed […] head, which for some reason or other has been lost to the owner’s family. It is common knowledge that these were highly valued […]” (ibid.). He also notes that his portrait theory can be equally applied to “two others known to me.” (ibid.).

We know that by 1929 Beasley’s collection contained three carved Maori heads, including the present lot. It is reasonable to suppose that it may be one of the three that he refers to (the head discussed and illustrated in the letter is now in the British Museum, London, inv. no. 1944 OC.2.807; the third head is in the Musée des beaux-arts, Montreal, inv. no. 1958.Pc.4).
As his ledger suggests, Beasley understood the present sculpture as a replacement for a lost mokomokai, or toi moko, the precious preserved head of an ancestor. He also presumably took it to be a portrait, just as he did the head mentioned in his letter to the JPS. The editors’ reply dismissed Beasley’s theory, summarily noting that “We do not know that the Maori carved such objects to serve as ‘portraits’ of his friends, and so preserved them as we preserve a photograph, but the Maori did carve out such heads and use them for a purpose not mentioned by our correspondent. The ruru, koruru, or parata is such a carved head [...].” (ibid.). The editors of the JPS overlooked the three self-portrait heads carved by the famous Ngapuhi rangatira, or chief, Hongi Hika (c. 1772 – 1828), during his 1814 visit to Sydney. The portraits were carved at the request of the Reverend Samuel Marsden, who wrote, “I told [Hongi Hika] one day, I wanted his head to send to England; and that he must either give me his head, or make one like it of wood.” (Marsden in Church Missionary Society, ed., The Missionary Register for the Year 1815 [...]. Vol. III, London, 1815, p. 198). As Crispin Howarth notes, this was presumably “gallows humour, and the acceptance by Hika of what would otherwise be an outrageous remark may underline a strong bond between these two men.” (Howarth, “From the Chisel of Mataora: The Maori Art of Skin Marking”, Tribal Art Magazine, No. 91, Spring 2019, p. 76; the article illustrates the Hongi Hika self-portrait now in the Macleay Museum, Sydney, inv. no. ETL570).

Of course, the editors of the JPS were correct to point out that Maori made many carved heads, such as the koruru or parata, gable masks which were placed at the apex of the wharenui, or meeting house. The head discussed in Beasley’s letter might fit such a purpose, and the late David Simmons more recently described it as a “mask for under a trapezoid [canoe] prow” (Starzecka, Neich, and Pendergrast, The Maori Collections of the British Museum, London, 2010, p. 72). The present lot, however, is an object that defies easy categorisation. It cannot be conceived of us as a koruru, and although it could have come from a post figure, or pou tokomanawa, it does not appear to have been cut from a larger, complete figure, but instead carved within the peculiar limits of the available piece of wood. This is perhaps most notable in how the moko, or skin markings, are adapted to the form of the head so that, without being absolutely symmetrical, both sides of the forehead mirror each other. The moko also runs just into the head’s top edge, and there is no evidence of an abrupt cut disrupting the pattern. The present sculpture has a full face, or moko kanohi of male moko. Moko was “a symbol of birthright, of recognized hereditary status, or it was earned as a privilege gained by deeds that brought great spiritual mana [... moko] not only shows a person’s individual traits but also is a mark of society, a connection to a person’s clan, or hapu, and a connection to their greater tribal community, iwi. Reading its markings allows others to visibly understand the wearer’s standing in life.” (Howarth, ibid., pp. 75-76).

Perhaps the present sculpture is best understood as an example of what the great Roger Neich called “metonymical portraiture”. Neich wrote that “Maori carving portraiture could be called metonymical in that a characteristic part of the individual was used to signify the whole person. This part could be a tattoo pattern known to belong to that individual, a well-known attribute such as a type of weapon, or a famous incident in which the individual participated. Metonymical portraiture especially suited a situation where the physiognomy of the individual being depicted was not known [... But even where the individuals depicted were only recently dead or occasionally still living, conventionalised metonymical portraiture predominated. [...] However ancestors and other individuals were represented, their presence in a composition was important not only for their own sakes, but even more so for the statements the composition made about the relationships between them and their descendants.” (Neich, Carved Histories: Rotorua Ngati Tarawhai Woodcarving, Auckland, 2001, p. 135).
Whalebone was the favoured material for the mallet used by a Maori wood carver, or tohunga whakairo, and it remained so throughout the 19th century once metal tools had all but replaced the stone adze and chisels of old. Such valuable and highly prized objects would come to possess some of the tapu associated with their owner and could not be used by another without his permission.

The richly patinated surface of this mallet shows the nicks and marks which were left as it struck the carver’s chisel. Almost hidden amongst these marks are several fanciful scenes that have been lightly incised into the whalebone’s surface, presumably by a non-Maori owner. Their naive quality provides an interesting contrast with the powerful and wonderfully well-carved head that emerges from the handle of this venerable old object.
MAORI SHORT CLUB, NEW ZEALAND

kotiate paroa

Length: 12 ½ in (31.8 cm)
Sperm whale (Physeter macrocephalus) bone

PROVENANCE
Nelson A. Rockefeller, New York, acquired by 1961
The Museum of Primitive Art, New York
Ben Heller, New York, acquired by 1982
Sotheby’s, New York, The Ben Heller Collection, December 1, 1983, lot 13
Frieda and Milton Rosenthal, Harrison, New York, acquired at the above auction
Arte Primitivo, New York, December 1, 2008, lot 90, consigned by the estate of the above
Rainer Werner Bock, Maui
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York, acquired from the above on May 4, 2016

PUBLISHED
The Museum of Primitive Art, Figure Sculpture from Polynesia in the Collection of the Museum of Primitive Art, 1961, no. 4 (listed)

EXHIBITED
The Museum of Primitive Art, New York, Figure Sculpture from Polynesia in the Collection of the Museum of Primitive Art, July 19 - December 31, 1961

$ 15,000-25,000

The present short club or kotiate paroa previously in the collection of Nelson Rockefeller is an exceptionally fine example of the short hand-held weapon carried by high-ranking Maori warriors of Aotearoa (New Zealand), used in combat and hung from the waist as a status object when not in use. The carver has patiently defined elegantly balanced lobes of whalebone, circumscribed with sharp bladed edges in a symmetrical composition centered upon a tiki image with projecting tongue. The butt of the club terminates in a second face; each incorporates features of parrot and man. Both its aesthetic beauty and fearsome function contributed to the mana of its original owner. Such objects were passed down in elite families as important ancestral heirlooms, and a warrior facing death when captured might request that his captors use his own supernatural weapon to deliver the final blow.
FEATHER CURRENCY, SANTA CRUZ ISLANDS, SOLOMON ISLANDS

tevu

Width (as mounted): 33 in (83.8 cm)
Cardinal myzomela (Myzomela cardinalis) feathers

PROVENANCE
Christie’s East, New York, June 11, 1996, lot 90
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York, acquired at the above auction

Feather currency, or tevu, was often exchanged for services and goods such as canoes, crops, turtles, and pigs, as well as during ceremonies such as marriages. Tevu required great expertise and skill to make. They were created by craftspeople from the Ndende Island, who would catch honeyeater birds, collecting only four feathers from each. Feather currencies could therefore include feathers from over three hundred birds. Each feather was attached to overlapping platelets, which were fixed on a fiber coil. The structure of the currency is clearly visible in this piece in places where the vibrant feathers have been lost. When not in use, tevu would be protected with powerful charms and the coil was wrapped in palm leaves and bark cloth.

$3,000-5,000
CANOE STERN FIGURE, SOLOMON ISLANDS

Height: 18 ¼ in (46.4 cm)

PROVENANCE
Taylor A. Dale, Santa Fe
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York, acquired from the above on May 13, 2001

Although it is not certain whether such stern figures were fastened to the outer or inner portion of the canoe stern, there are several clues that suggest that these objects were kept inside the boat. Firstly, the size of the small standing or sitting figures, such as the one represented here, would not have been visible from afar and would have likely been better appreciated from inside the canoe itself. Furthermore, the triangular portion, as well as the figure itself, would have been continuously submerged by incoming waves and battered with constant use of the canoe.

This canoe stern ornament is striking with its simple yet strong formal quality. A figure with a decorated headdress sits at the top of the triangular, flat portion. The figure looks straight ahead, eyes deeply inset and mouth slightly open, its arms bent, hands resting under the chin. Its body is decorated with incised lines, which would often have been rubbed with white lime.

$ 3,000-5,000
45

PADDLE, BOUGAINVILLE OR BUKA, SOLOMON ISLANDS

hose

Length: 63 in (160 cm)
The blade of the paddle with a label printed in black ink:
“FENTON & SONS, Old Curiosity Shop, (Regd) OXFORD STREET, LONDON.”; the label with a partially effaced and illegible inscription in black ink.

PROVENANCE
Fenton and Sons, “The Old Curiosity Shop”, London (active circa 1880-1930)
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York

As is typical of canoe paddles from the Northern Solomon Islands, this piece is decorated with very low relief carving, using contrasting red and black pigments. The tip of the paddle is painted with alternating red and black bands, ending in an asymmetrical curve, a design that is reminiscent of dripping water on a paddle that has been partially submerged. The head of what is known as a kokorra, with its emblematic softly pointed headdress, has been delicately carved towards the middle of the paddle head. Very little is known about kokorra figures, although they are commonly represented in art from the Northern Solomons, most of the time sitting in squatting positions with hands raised.

$2,000-3,000
PARRYING CLUB, MAKIRA (SAN CRISTOBAL), SOLOMON ISLANDS

**roromaraugi**

Height: 48 in (122 cm)

**PROVENANCE**
American Trade, acquired from an estate in New Hampshire
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York, acquired from the above at Farmington Fair, Farmington, Connecticut

Parrying clubs with flat, curved heads were used to deflect arrows and spears. This stylized piece is elegantly carved with a curved, sickle-shaped blade. The shape of the head of the club may have been carved to resemble a stylized bird or a sea turtle. A small, caryatid figure sits at the bottom of the handle, before terminating in a pointed tip.

$ 5,000-7,000
WAR CLUB, MALAITA OR SOUTH MALAITA, SOLOMON ISLANDS
supe, supi, or subi

Length: 28 in (71.1 cm)

PROVENANCE
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York

For men in the Solomon Islands, honing superior fighting skills was key to becoming a successful member of society. With its arrow-like head and curved base, this war club is gracefully carved in a balanced and symmetrical manner. It bears a dark patina and a rich coloration.

$800-1,200
KANAK PRESTIGE AXE, NEW CALEDONIA

**gi okono**

Height: 19 ¼ in (48.9 cm)

**PROVENANCE**

Charles-Wesley Hourdé, Paris
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York, acquired from the above in May 2008

Gi okono (axe), or nhouet were among the most highly prized objects for the Kanak people of New Caledonia. They were used in ceremonies and as emblems in warfare, and served as symbols of individual chiefs. It is believed that these objects are illustrations of the Kanak vision of the Cosmos.

This janiform gi okono bears a striking nephrite plaque fitted and tied to a baton. The fiber cords that are used to fix the stone are wrapped around the rod and extend to the base. The faces at the top of the piece, while not extremely detailed, bear the deeply set facial features and oval face reminiscent of central and southern Kanak masks.

$12,000-18,000
KANAK MASK, NEW CALEDONIA

Height: 8 ¼ in (21 cm)

PROVENANCE
French Private Collection
Galerie Flak, Paris
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York, acquired from the above on May 24, 2006

This mask, with its deeply carved, striking features, its inset eyes and a prominent nose, is a fine example of the style of central and southern Grande Terre (the main island of New Caledonia). The intensity of the mask’s aura is enhanced by the deep, oily-like patina on the surface, created with a powder made from burnt and crushed candle nuts. As is typical of masks from southern Grand Terre, this mask bears a broad, flat face with a rectangular mouth limited to little more than a slit. The wearer of this mask would look through the mouth slit as the eyes are not pierced.

$ 8,000-12,000
KANAK SPEAR ELEMENT WITH MASK, NEW CALEDONIA

Height: 9 in (22.9 cm)

PROVENANCE
James Tyler, Washington, D.C.
Sotheby’s, New York, May 4, 1995, lot 133, consigned by the above
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York, acquired at the above auction

This piece, a segment of a very long Kanak spear, displays a charming and expressive miniature mask at the middle of the shaft. The mask, with prominent facial features and an elongated face, is framed on either end by decorative motifs, alternating between straight lines and zigzagging ones.

$ 4,000-6,000
KANAK CLUB, NEW CALEDONIA

porowara maru

Length: 28 in (71.1 cm)

PROVENANCE
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York

Porowara maru, or “bird head” clubs of New Caledonia are carved in the form of stylized bird heads with long, pointed beaks. While this is one theory, none of New Caledonia’s native birds have similar beaks, which has led some scholars to believe that these clubs instead represent the stylized head of a sea turtle. Such objects were used by chiefs and symbolized wealth and rank. Occasionally, these items were exchanged as gifts during ceremonial gatherings.

$800-1,200
52
AXE, EFATE, VANUATU
Length: 34 ½ in (87.6 cm)

PROVENANCE
Anthony Jack, London
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York, acquired from
the above on September 22, 1984

The delicacy and refinement of this weapon’s
beautifully carved openwork butt provide a striking
contrast with the European hatchet blade hafted to
the head. The Swiss ethnologist Felix Speiser, who
conducted research in Vanuatu between 1910-1912,
was greatly impressed by the quality of artistry he
encountered on Efate and noted that weapons with
this sort of openwork “can be allocated to Efate
without further ado, for in no other island would the
natives have known how to produce carving like this
[…].” (Speiser, Ethnology of Vanuatu: an Early Twentieth

$2,000-3,000
53

CLUB, VANUATU

Length: 27 in (68.6 cm)

PROVENANCE
William Kranzer, New Bedford, Massachusetts
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York, acquired from the above in 1979

$ 500-700
PROVENANCE
Laurent Dodier, Le Val-Saint-Père
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York, acquired from the above on February 7, 2012

This elegant paddle-shaped club is a rare type that, according to Felix Speiser, was found only on Pentecost Island. (Speiser, Ethnology of Vanuatu: an Early Twentieth Century Study, Honolulu, 1996, p. 207). The raised form carved on the blade and the sharp striking edge that projects from one side of the head are characteristic of the style. Here the rippled surface of the wood lends the club an organic, leaf-like quality. Human hair is wound around the pommel, presumably to improve the grip when wielding the club.

$2,000–3,000
55

CLUB, AMBRYM, VANUATU

Length: 39 ¼ in (99.7 cm)

PROVENANCE
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York

$ 500-700
The unique sacred instruments of New Ireland called lunet or livika were used in malagan ceremonies, and played by moistening the hand and drawing it quickly across the smooth surface of its three projecting tongues. The sound which resonates from the vibration of the wood resembles the call of a bird; the instruments were also called lapka, bunnet and liamuat depending on their region of origin, these names referring to birds. The otherworldly sound served as an intercession between the physical and spirit worlds, with the call of the bird representing the voice of the spirits of the dead.

“New Irelanders see this instrument as a kind of bird and each livika has its own name” (Gunn and Pelletier, New Ireland: Art of the South Pacific, Brussels, 2006, p. 192). They were generally kept hidden from view, and brought out and played at funerals of prominent clan members, accompanying the vigil and burial.

The present example was acquired in situ by the George Wilkinson, who served as Deputy District Officer at Kavieng, New Ireland, circa 1919-20.
Highly anticipated and meticulously prepared for long periods of time, often over the course of years, malagan ceremonies are intricate and extensive affairs that are held in the name of one or more deceased members of a community. Although community members utilize the time for a multiplicity of enterprises and transactions, these occasions signal the culmination of the mourning period for the departed alongside a tightly choreographed and stylized sequence of music, song, gestures, and dancing. Peltier describes how ‘This ultimate exhibition is designed, according to a common expression in New Ireland, to ‘finish the dead man,’ to efface him from the world of the living by sending his soul into the spirit world. But it is not merely a farewell. It is a matter of controlling the “soul” or rather the “vital force” of the dead man in order to pass it on to the next generation. This vital force allows the clans to live and reproduce themselves from generation to generation. “Finishing the dead man” means picking up his energy, channeling it and sharing it out among the members of the clan. The aim is to tighten social bonds between the man or men who take the place of the dead man and the rest of the community.’ (Gunn & Peltier, eds., New Ireland: Art of the South Pacific, 2006, p. 78)

The present mask is a classic example of the celebrated tatanua type danced in malagan ceremonies. Accompanied by the tempo of drums, boards and bamboo sticks, the male dancers either paired off or lined up to dance the masks in public. An homage to male beauty, tatanua masks depict elaborate coiffures, wide, prominent noses, pierced earlobes, and broad mouths with healthy teeth. See Gunn, New Ireland: Ritual Arts of Oceania, 1997, p. 146 for a more detailed description of the ceremony, transcribed from the German trader Robert Parkinson’s first-hand account from circa 1900.
SIDE ELEMENT FROM A SCULPTURE FOR MALAGAN CEREMONY, NEW IRELAND

Height: 24 ¼ in (61.5 cm)

PROVENANCE
Herz-Jesu Mission Museum, Münster-Hiltrup
Kevin Conru, Brussels
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York, acquired from the above on February 5, 2009

Like the preceding lot the present sculptural element was part of the elaborate ritual artwork used in New Ireland malagan ceremonies, which incorporate human and animal iconography in abstract geometric compositions. Colorful and elaborate, this example depicts a flying fish descending upon a bird-man, standing within an ornate and rhythmic matrix of openwork and was conceived as an element of a larger mask.

$2,500-3,500
HEAD FROM AN ANCESTOR FIGURE, NEW IRELAND

Height: 8 in (20.3 cm)

PROVENANCE
Norman P. Hurst, Cambridge, Massachusetts
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York, acquired from the above

This smiling stone head is a fragment from a kulap, or funerary figure, from the southern part of New Ireland. Carved from soft chalky stone, these figures were central to ancestral cults and depicted particular deceased individuals, serving as a locus for the spirit of the deceased to settle and act as a benevolent intermediary to the spirit world.

$1,500-2,500
Decorated war shields were rare in the Massim Area, as they were reserved only for the bravest and most daring warriors. Today, only about one hundred or so vayola shields are still known to exist. Indeed, the intricately detailed designs on this shield, incised and painted in red ochre, white lime, and black pigment, indicate the exceptional quality of this object. The design is focused around a central oval form, flanked by two birds. Two rosettes top this section, with two vertical striped lines ending in a third rosette, which serves as a central point in a downward-facing crescent shape at the top of the shield. The background is covered with small, repeated, rectangular patterns. This convex, oval shield that widens at the base, still retains its original cane handles, which are threaded through the center of the piece.
LIME SPATULA, MASSIM AREA, MILNE BAY PROVINCE, PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Height: 9¼ in (23.5 cm)

PROVENANCE
Michael Hamson, Los Angeles
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York

While the spatula portion of the piece is no longer integral to the piece, the figure represented here kneels on a decorative base, which is carved with curvilinear designs. The figure itself gazes forward, hands resting gently on its lower abdomen. Lime spatulas served as tools in the practice of betel chewing, a social habit, which was also common in ritual and ceremonial contexts.

$2,000-3,000
POUNDER, CHUUK (TRUK), CAROLINE ISLANDS

Height: 6 ¾ in (17.1 cm)

PROVENANCE
Kevin Conru, Brussels
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York, acquired from the above on October 1, 2003

This supremely elegant and harmonious coral pounder from Chuuk balances form and function in perfect equilibrium.

$5,000-7,000
CLUB, CHUUK (TRUK), CAROLINE ISLANDS

Length: 70 1/4 in (179.1 cm)
The head of the club inscribed in black ink: “Carolines N.B. Emerson Coll secured 1884 in Nomo from Capt. Taro”

PROVENANCE
Nathaniel Bright Emerson, Honolulu, acquired from “Captain Taro” in the Nomoi (or Mortlock) Islands in 1884
Kevin Conru, Brussels
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York, acquired from the above on May 27, 2005

This elegant and imposing club from Chuuk is an object of impressive scale and considerable rarity. Very few similar examples are recorded in collections. A long club with a head of closely related form is in the collection of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (inv. no. FE002058). It is incorrectly attributed to the Cook Islands – an error which perhaps reflects the rarity and unfamiliarity of the type. Another example is in the collection of the Etnografiska museet, Stockholm (inv. no. 1945.11.0028), whilst two others of slightly different form but similar scale are in the collection of the musée du quai Branly – Jacques Chirac, Paris (inv. nos. 72.53.305 and 72.53.301).

$ 12,000-18,000
ATHABASCAN OCTOPUS BAG

Length: 12 ¼ in (32 cm)

PROVENANCE
William H. Guthman, Westport, Connecticut
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York, acquired from the above on January 25, 1997

The historian Kate C. Duncan traces the octopus bag’s origins back to eighteenth-century “double-tabbled bags” from the upper Great Lakes region. During the mid-nineteenth century these highly distinctive bags enjoyed immense popularity amongst the Cree and Cree-Métis, who carried them across the continent, exciting admiration and occasionally imitation as they went. Eventually, the bags reached the hands of the inland and coastal Tlingit, who named them octopus or devil fish bags, in reference to the four pairs of hanging tabs. (Duncan, “So Many Bags, so Little Known”, Arctic Anthropology, Vol. 28, No. 1, 1991, p. 57).

Bags such as the present lot from the northern interior usually feature “European-inspired floral designs rendered in overlay-style bead embroidery [...], a form of decoration which gradually spread its way across the northern part of the continent, ultimately reaching the coast in the late nineteenth century (Vincent, Brydon, and Coe, eds, Art of the North American Indians: The Thaw Collection, Cooperstown, 2000, p. 303). Here the fabric of the bag itself is composed of one of the staple cloths of the fur trade, blue stroud, attached to a backing of calico. The rich yet sober blue of the wool provides a very effective ground for the wonderfully lively floral motifs, delicately executed in tiny seed beads.

$ 5,000-7,000
WASCO-WISHRAM BOWL

Length: 6 ¾ in (17.2 cm)
Mountain goat (Oreamnos americanus) horn

PROVENANCE
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York

The goat horn used to make this bowl bears a very similar texture to tightly grained wood and allows for the finely detailed decoration that spans across the underside of this piece. The most common decorative elements of Wasco-Wishram bowls include zigzag bands, which on this bowl appear below the handles with rectangular openings. Below this pattern, concentric circles have been carved with two vertical lines stretching towards the top of the bowl.

$ 3,000-5,000
HAIDA SPOON

Length: 9 ½ in (24.1 cm)
Mountain goat (Oreamnos americanus) horn

PROVENANCE
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York

This ceremonial spoon illustrates, in miniature form, much of the same iconographic complexity as a totem pole, the most widely famous form of Northwest Coast art; both meticulously record the histories and legends of the people who made them. Association with a utilitarian purpose has perhaps diminished the attention paid to these richly complex spoons, which were objects of great importance and prestige. They were not objects of everyday use – that role was served by largely undecorated spoons of red cedar, red alder, or hemlock. Complex ceremonial spoons such as the present example were used at the k̲ax̲, the ceremony commonly called the potlatch, and they served as important records of significant ceremonies and events. Most were made for the noble families who occupied the top strata of the hierarchical societies of the Northwest Coast, whilst some were doubtlessly used by shamans, or ḥítk̲, who were subject to certain prohibitions and taboos. The interpretation of the motifs and emblems on these objects is complex; although some characters can be tentatively identified, their full meaning was perhaps only entirely understood by the people who made them.

$ 3,000-5,000
Feasts were special events within Tlingit communities and involved the use of elaborate dishes, ladles, and spoons, which enforced notions of identity and status. Depending on the season, Northwest coast feasting bowls would often be used to serve everything from dried salmon or other fish, seal meat, berries, beaten soapberries, and fish or seal oil used to dip food.

This elongated, rectangular bowl is decorated on either end with painted animal faces. Sometimes, such pieces were also adorned with carving or inlay of shell or opercula. On the underside of this bowl, along an old stitched break, a small carved head of a bird has been fastened to the piece.
TSIMSHIAN RAVEN RATTLE

Length: 13 ¾ in (35 cm)
The proper left wing inscribed in black ink: "BEASLEY COLLECTION, Haida 11-6-1931" and with an arrow-like glyph; the proper right wing inscribed in black ink: "Haida. BRITISH COLUMBIA. H.M.S. GROWLER. 1864"

PROVENANCE
Lieutenant-Commander Edmund Verney, acquired between 1862-1864, probably in October 1863 at Metlakatla
Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Harry Verney, Bart., Claydon House, Buckinghamshire, by descent from the above
Harry G. Beasley, Chislehurst, acquired from the above on June 11, 1931
Irene M. Beasley, Brighton, by descent from the above
Graves Son & Pilcher, Hove, March 3, 1975, lot 204, consigned by the estate of the above
Private Collection, acquired at the above auction
Christie’s, London, June 26, 1995, lot 187, consigned by the above
Jeffrey R. Myers, New York, acquired at the above auction
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York, acquired from the above on June 6, 2003

$ 100,000-150,000

This Tsimshian rattle is in classic raven form with a reclining human figure, the human tongue held in the beak of the bird’s head incorporated into the raven’s tail. The human figure has slim limbs, the fingers of the hands painted on in geometric form. The flat, formline embellished face of the human is often seen in Tsimshian versions of such a rattle, where Tlingit or Haida rattles as often would exhibit a masklike sculptural face. The thin slab body is painted red with rows of fine dashing parallel to the body. Rows of dashing are a common Tsimshian characteristic of the mid-nineteenth century. The eyelid lines of the raven’s head, breast, human face and tail are thinly defined by carving but are unpainted, as is common among Tsimshian historical works of this period.

The black and red formlines that embroider the surfaces of the rattle are composed and proportioned in a manner typical of the second quarter of the nineteenth century, and imaginative red secondary designs combine with the refined sculpture to indicate the work of an experienced master.

Raven rattles are held and employed to accompany certain dance performances of chiefs and high ranking individuals, who wear carved forehead plaque headdresses hung with white ermine skins and topped with the long, resilient whiskers of large bull sea lions [see lot 72].

It has been suggested that the raven/human imagery of these rattles illustrates Raven the Creator’s own self-creation. Nass-shaki-yell (Raven-at-the-head-of-the-Nass) was the keeper of all the light in the world, and was often depicted as a huge bird with a completely recurved beak. Raven entered the body of the daughter of Nass-shaki-yell by disguising himself as a hemlock needle in her drinking water, and was reborn as her raven/human child. The raven child later stole the light from his grandfather and released it to the world. Nass-shaki-yell is a high-ranking crest of the Gaanax áldi Tlingit (as well as certain Tsimshian-speaking groups), and it may be that this important mythological figure is represented by the formline face with a recurved beak seen on the back of nearly all raven rattles.

Steven C. Brown
March 2021
This rattle was acquired on the Northwest Coast by Royal Navy officer Lieutenant Edmund Hope Verney (1838-1910), who spent three years on Vancouver Island commanding HMS *Grappler* during the Cariboo Gold Rush of the early 1860s.

Verney collected several important objects during his time on the Northwest Coast. In February of 1863, he sent a group of items to his father, Sir Harry Verney, including two K’ómoks house posts now on view at the British Museum (inv. nos. Am1944.02.393 and Am1987.Q.5). It appears, however, that Verney made his most significant acquisitions in October of 1863 during a visit to Metlakatla in Alaska with his friend the Rev. R. J. Dundas, whose famous collection of Northwest Coast art was sold in these rooms in October 2006. Dundas had asked the missionary William Duncan to obtain objects for him, and in his journal entry for Monday, October 26, 1863 he wrote that he and Verney “spent the morning examining some Indian curiosities, Mr. D. had collected for us. I wished if possible to obtain some of the Medicine Men’s implements and tools [...]” (quoted in Christie’s, London, June 26, 1995, p. 51).

Verney probably acquired the present rattle during this visit. When he sent a second group of objects to his father in March of 1864, the list of items mentions “2. Medicine-man’s rattles.” and “1. Carved chiefs-rattle” (Pritchard, ed., *Vancouver Island Letters of Edmund Hope Verney, 1862-65*, Vancouver, 1996, p. 197). By October of 1864, Verney wrote to his father, “I am buying one or two curiosities, but very few: I sent you a really good collection at the beginning of this year, and there is no object in getting more of the same [...]” (ibid., p. 226).

In 1931 the English collector Harry G. Beasley (1881-1939) acquired several Northwest Coast items, including this rattle, from Sir Harry Verney, Edmund’s son. The entry dated June 11, 1931, in Beasley’s ledger reads, “First portion of the Verney Collection. Bought from Sir Harry Verney, Bart. Steeple Claydon, Bucks. Collected by Capt. Edmund Hope Verney, H.M.S. Growler In the Pacific 1864. N.W. Coast Haida:- A rattle carved as a raven, with figure subjects, and coloured red, blue and black.” (Beasley’s ledgers, Anthropology Library and Research Centre, British Museum, London).

In both his ledger and the inscription on one of the raven’s wings, Beasley notes that the name of the vessel which Verney commanded was HMS *Growler* rather than HMS *Grappler*. This is a misunderstanding; Verney commanded HMS *Growler* in the Mediterranean in the early 1870s, and his son presumably gave Beasley the name of this later vessel rather than HMS *Grappler*. Beasley attributed all of the Northwest Coast objects from the Verney collection to the Haida people, but, as Steve Brown notes here, the rattle is the work of a Tsimshian master.
BOWL, PROBABLY TSIMSHIAN

Length: 14 ¼ in (37.5 cm)

PROVENANCE
James and Marilyn Bergstrom, Seattle
Christie’s, New York, December 5, 1996, lot 21, consigned by the above
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York, acquired at the above auction

$ 4,000-6,000

Square bowls of this type appear to have primarily been made on the mainland of British Columbia, among the speakers of the Nisga’a and Tsimshian language family. The geometric incisings at the side corners are a skeuomorphic reference to folded birchbark containers of similar form in the mainland interior. Bowls of this kind were used to serve foods such as dried fish, or the whipped berries known as sopalallie, or soapberries, for the copious white foam they become when a small volume of berries is vigorously whipped with a similar amount of water.

The formline patterns painted and relief carved on the ends follow a general broad face representation. Specific crest images are not to be found on bowls of this type, which are made, gifted, and traded around to various owners, regardless of clan affiliations. The large ovoid eyes were painted red, like the secondary elements within other parts of the design. Eyes are nearly always black, even if the primary formlines are red. Here that tradition is foregone in order to better distribute red color across the design field. Red turban snail opercula are inlaid into the wide rim of the bowl, an enhancement that speaks to the high status of the bowl’s owners, able to assemble and utilize these rare bits of carbonaceous shell that are only found in isolated locations along the outer shores of the Northwest Coast.

Steven C. Brown
March 2021
BOWL, PROBABLY TSIMSHIAN

Length: 10 in (25.4 cm)

PROVENANCE
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York

With formline design characteristics similar to the other square bowl, though simplified due to its smaller size, this one appears to have been created within the same general timeframe as the larger example. Condition wise, however, this bowl exhibits indications of a different primary use; that of containing eulachon (fish) or seal oil, both of which were used as condiments in which to dip pieces of dried smoked salmon or other fish, such as halibut, to enhance their flavor and qualities of “chew.”

This use is apparent from the build-up of dried, black-oxidized oil residue on the interior and soaked-through exterior ends of the vessel. The bowl’s small size suggests it was used as a personal oil vessel, perhaps for use by more than one or two diners at a time. The rim has not been inlaid with the opercula shells that are common in many other examples including the larger vessel here. This may be related to the vessel’s intended purpose as an oil dish. Repeated drenching with fish or seal oil may have led to the opercula inlays falling out of their carefully cut recesses.

Steven C. Brown
March 2021

$ 2,000-3,000
The Northwest Coast shaman was a powerful intermediary between the spiritual and mortal realms. “He cures the sick, controls the weather, brings success in war and on the hunt, foretells the future [...] reveals and overthrows the fiendish machinations of witches, and makes public demonstrations of his powers in many awe-inspiring ways. He is the most powerful figure in his own lineage.” (de Laguna, Under Mount Saint Elias: the History and Culture of the Yakutat Tlingit, Part Two, Smithsonian Contributions to Anthropology, Vol. 7, Washington, D.C., 1972, p. 670).

To fulfill his role in society the shaman required extensive paraphernalia, which included masks, rattles, animal skin garments, carved amulets of ivory or bone, and headdresses, or crowns, such as the present lot. According to Wardwell, these “shamanic crowns are in the form of curved tines representing bear claws that are attached to an animal hide or cloth headband.” (Wardwell, Tangible Visions: Northwest Coast Indian Shamanism and Its Art, New York, 1996, p. 213). Here the fragile headband is absent, but the finely carved attachments remain.

$12,000-18,000
The weaving of “Chilkat” blankets originated with the Tsimshian people, specifically, with the women of the Nass River region known as the Nishga. Over time, this weaving tradition spread to the Tsimshian’s neighbors on the Northwest Coast - the Haida and the Tlingit - who would become the most prolific weavers in the region. The name “Chilkat” derives from the prolific production of blankets by the Chilkat subgroup of the Tlingit (Jilkáat Kwáan). In the Tlingit language, Chilkat blankets were called naaxiin, which roughly translates to “fringe about the body.”

Prior to the introduction of commercial yarn to Northwest Coast communities by white settlers in the latter half of the 19th century, Chilkat blankets were woven from two-ply mountain goat wool and yellow cedar bark. Due to the size, artistic intricacy, and volume of raw materials required, the production of each blanket was an extremely laborious and time-intensive process. This process began with a male artist creating a painted pattern board of the blanket’s design, which a female weaver transposed into textile form. The present lot contains characteristics of the classic Chilkat blanket type: its pentagonal outline resembles the façade of a house turned upside down; its thick black and yellow borders frame three clearly defined panels, with a primary design filling the central panel, flanked by two mirrored and symmetrical side panels. The forms present within each panel are highly geometric and symbolic, depicting animals and animal parts ubiquitous in Northwest Coast art and mythology, though a detailed interpretation of the meaning of each can be challenging, if not impossible.

Their exquisite beauty and the effort involved in the production process made Chilkat blankets the preserve of the Northwest Coast nobility, who possessed the wealth to make or to own a blanket. Blankets endowed their possessor with great prestige and were worn as ceremonial robes by both men and women. Often, the blankets were featured in dances, during which the rich colors, dynamic lines, and complex patterns came alive with a dancer’s movements. At the conclusion of potlatches - elaborate ceremonies consisting of speeches, singing, feasting, and dancing to observe an important occasion or affirm social status - the host presented “the rights or privileges he claimed - such as the right to display a certain crest, to own a name, or to raise a totem pole. His ownership of these privileges required validation by the invited guests, who witnessed his presentation and who received payment from him in the form of gifts” (Samuel, The Chilkat Dancing Blanket, Norman, 1990, p. 34). To give a blanket away at a potlatch was an act of great largesse since none but the richest chiefs could afford to give away such valuable articles. Emmons notes, “during a potlatch, whole blankets may be presented to the most honored guest, but generally they were cut in strips and distributed; and such pieces are esteemed far beyond their intrinsic value (Emmons, The Chilkat Blanket, New York 1907, p. 345).
The imagery of this Tlingit halibut hook, or náx, imbued the object with supernatural powers that would help the fisherman when he set out to sea in the early spring in pursuit of the first fresh fish of the year: the bottom-dwelling halibut.

For the Tlingit, halibut fishing has a cultural significance that transcended its importance as a means of acquiring food. Aldona Jonaitis writes that “halibut fishing relates to the view of a world composed of two complementary parts: one, the secure realm of the village and its environs; the other, the far less secure and potentially hazardous external realm beyond human settlement. To fish for halibut is to penetrate the external world and to subject oneself to its dangers. Supernatural assistance in the form of a halibut hook helps minimize this danger.” (Jonaitis, Tlingit Halibut Hooks: An Analysis of the Visual Symbols of a Rite of Passage, New York, 1981, p. 3).

The imagery that appears on halibut hooks such as the present lot relates closely to the “images found on the art of the Tlingit shaman”, or íxt. Although the imagery of halibut hooks is “shamanistic” rather than “shamanic”, since the íxt played no active role in fishing, Jonaitis notes that halibut hooks have “an innate potency” similar to that of the small charms of ivory and bone that formed part of the shaman’s extensive paraphernalia (ibid., p. 19).
amhalait

Height (frontlet mask): 7 in (17.8 cm); Length (including train): 51 in (129.5 cm)

PROVENANCE
Chief Wi Hìegwah (Jim Lax n’itsx), Gitwangak (Kitwanga), British Columbia
Charles Wallace Zollman, Indianapolis
Butterfield and Butterfield, San Francisco, November 17, 1999, lot 9136, consigned by the above
Jeffrey R. Myers, New York, acquired after the above auction
Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel, New York, acquired from the above on July 13, 2006

PUBLISHED
George F. MacDonald, The Totem Poles and Monuments of Gitwangak Village, Ottawa, 1984, p. 26, fig. 15, p. 28, fig. 16, p. 35, fig. 18, and p. 113, fig. 135
Joanne MacDonald, Gitwangak Village Life: a Museum Collection, Ottawa, 1984, cover, p. 18, fig. 3, and p. 19, fig. 4

* $ 20,000-30,000
Bill Holm writes that “from the farthest northwestern reach of Tlingit country at Yakutat Bay, southward along the coast to the middle of Vancouver Island, dancing chiefs wore crowns as elegant as rich material and sculptor’s skill could make. Traditions of the tribes assign various places of origin to the dancing headdress, but, whichever is correct, it must have been somewhere in the north. [...] The features of the headdress are the same wherever it is worn: a cylindrical frame – often made of strips of whale baleen and covered with cloth – from the back of which hangs a long panel covered with rows of white ermine skins; an upstanding circlet of the long, springy whiskers of the Steller’s sea lion; and a spectacular plaque carved of hardwood, painted and inlaid with abalone shell on the forehead. This plaque, or frontlet, is carved to represent a crest or a mythical character. The figure in the center is surrounded by a flange that is usually covered with inset plates of brilliantly iridescent abalone shell. Inlays of the same shell flash from the eyes, teeth, and joints.” (Holm, The Box of Daylight: Northwest Coast Indian Art, Seattle, 1983, p. 19).

“The dance must have traveled from tribe to tribe with the headdress as its use spread over the coast. The dancer appears with blanket and apron and often a raven rattle [...]. Knees slightly bent and legs spread, he jumps on both feet to the time of the song beat – short jumps, feet hardly off the floor, making the ermine rows covering his back jump in turn. The blanket was spread by the wearer’s arms or elbows. The crown of sea lion whiskers holds a loose fluff of eagle down when the dancing begins. The whiskers rustle and clatter as the dancer bobs and tosses his head, shaking white wisps of down through the whisker barrier to swirl around his dancing figure. The white down means peace, or welcome, to the guests at a potlatch. Chiefs dance to greet canoes invited from far villages. Canoe-borne visitors dance in turn, and the swirling down from their headdresses drifts shoreward on the wind and over the host and his tribe on the beach. [...] In its rich composite of material, form, and movement, no Northwest Coast object expresses the ideas of rank and heredity, supernatural power, drama, and aesthetics so well as the dancing headdress. (Ibid.)
In a letter to a former owner about this object, Bill Holm commented that “the frontlet and headdress I believe to be at least nineteenth century and probably Tsimshian in origin [...].” (Holm letter to Zollman, quoted in Butterfield & Butterfield auction catalogue, November 17, 1999, p. 18). The Tsimshian and Gitxsan call this form of crown or frontlet headdress amhalai’t. The Steller sea lion whiskers that typically appear at the top of the headdress are replaced here by strips of metal wire which echo their form. Holm’s letter notes that “The wire ‘sealion whiskers’ are not unique, I know of [...] other old headdresses with them.” (ibid.).

At some point in its history this frontlet headdress lost its association with the chief to whom it once belonged. However, when a group of ten Northwest Coast photographs appeared at auction in the spring of 2002, Jeffrey Myers immediately recognised that this important object was the frontlet headdress worn by a chief in two images. Together with the stamp “Department of Mines and Geological Survey, Photographic Division”, the back of each photograph bore a handwritten inscription. One photo is inscribed “Chief Larhaitz”, whilst the other is inscribed “Chief Lagaxnits of Gitwanga, near his totem pole”. In a letter to Jeffrey Myers, Bill Holm noted that these are “both attempts to spell Laxnitz”. The man pictured is Jim Lax n’itsx, a Gitxsan chief “whose name as the head of the Larhsail (Laxsail) phratry [kinship group] was ‘Hlengwah’.” (Holm, personal letter to Jeffrey Myers, June 16, 2002). Hlengwah means “earthquake”, whilst Lax n’itsx signifies “looks to both sides” (MacDonald, Gitwangak Village Life: a Museum Collection, Ottawa, 1984, p. 35). Jim Lax n’itsx was “promoted to the rank of chief about 1870 [...]”, when he was still a young man (MacDonald, The Totem Poles and Monuments of Gitwangak Village, Ottawa, 1984, p. 95). He is photographed wearing the frontlet headdress in several photographs. The earliest image, which shows Hlengwah with his son, was taken circa 1900 (ibid., p. 26, fig. 15), whilst the last picture was taken on July 31, 1927 (ibid., p. 30, fig. 18). In 1924 the American artist W. Langdon Kihn painted a striking portrait of Chief Hlengwah, dressed in his full regalia and wearing the frontlet headdress (McCord Museum, Montreal, inv. no. M927.102). He is similarly depicted in a 1926 charcoal and chalk drawing by the Canadian artist Edwin Headley Holgate (Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City (inv. no. 1935.01)).
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Lot with this symbol indicates that a party has provided Sotheby’s with an irrevocable bid on the lot. This irrevocable bid is not in the form of a cash deposit but is at a stated value that ensures that the lot will sell. The irrevocable bidder, who may be beneficial to the seller, is extending the irrevocable bid by providing the irrevocable bidder by receiving a confirmation of the winning bid. Under such circumstances, the total guarantee is irrevocable and will not follow the title to the lot after the hammer price is determined.

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Selling at Auction

If you have property you wish to sell, Sotheby’s team of specialists and client services representatives will assist you through the entire process. Simply contact the appropriate specialist (specialized departments are listed in the catalogue) for a consultation with a Sotheby’s representative or a Sotheby’s regional office representative for suggestions before you list your property

Property Evaluation

There are three general ways Sotheby’s can evaluate your property:

1) In-house

You may bring your property directly to our galleries where our specialists will give you a valuation estimate. This is a free service and there is no charge for this service, but we require that you telephone ahead for an appointment.

2) By Photograph

If your property is not portable, or if you are not able to visit our galleries, you may either send in a clear photograph of each item. If you have a large collection, a representative selection of photographs will be required. We also reserve the right to include the dimensions, artist's signature or maker, medium, physical condition and any other relevant information. Our specialists will provide a free preliminary appraisal estimate subject to a final evaluation and authentication.

3) By your own home

Evaluations of property can also be made in your home. The fees for such visits are based on the scope and diversity of property, with travel expenses additional. Those fees may be refunded if you consign your property for sale at Sotheby's. If there is considerable time involved, we can arrange for an informal “walkthrough.” Once your property has been evaluated, Sotheby’s representatives can then help you determine how to proceed should you wish to continue with the auction process. They will provide information regarding sellers’ commission rates and other charges, auction venues, shipping, and any further services you may require.

Sotheby’s Services

Sotheby’s also offers a range of other services to our clients beyond buying and selling at auction. These services are described below. Further information on any of the services described below can be found at sothebys.com.

Valuations and Appraisals

Sotheby’s Valuations and Appraisals Services offers advice regarding personal property assets to trusts, estates, and private clients in order to help museums, executors, advisors, and collectors meet their goals. We provide efficient and confidential advice and assistance for all appraisal and auction services. Sotheby’s can prepare appraisals to suit a variety of needs, including estate tax and planning, insurance, charitable contribution and collaborative loan. Our appraisals are widely accepted by the Internal Revenue Service, tax and estate planning professionals, and insurance firms. In the event that a sale is considered, we will provide auction estimates, sales proposals and accompanying marketing plans. When sales are underway, the group works closely with the appropriate specialist departments to ensure that clients’ needs are met.

Financial Services

Sotheby’s offers a wide range of financial services including advances on consignments, as well as loans secured by art and collectibles for individuals or institutions.

Museum Services

Tailored to meet the unique needs of museums and non-profits in the marketplace, Sotheby’s offers personal, professional assistance in a range of services, including appraisals, donations, acquisitions and special events.

Corporate Art Services

Devoted to serving either established or emerging corporations, Sotheby’s Corporate Art Services Department can prepare appraisal reports, advise on acquisitions and dispositions, manage all aspects of consignment, assist in developing arts management strategies and oversee events catering to a corporation’s needs.

Information on Sales and Tax Related to Purchases at Auction

To better assist our clients, we have prepared the following information on Sales and Use Tax related to property purchased at auction.

Why Sotheby’s Collects Sales Tax

Virtually all State Sales Tax Laws require a corporation to register with the State’s Tax Authorities and collect and remit sales tax to the corporation in the manner established by the state’s Department of Finance or Economic Presence within the State. The state in which a sale is made determines the state’s law. Federal law is based on the state to register as a sales tax collector, and remit sales tax to the state. New York sales tax is collected on the hammer price, buyer’s premium, overhead premium and any other applicable charges on any property picked up or delivered in New York, regardless of the state or country from which the purchaser resides or does business.

Where Sotheby’s Collects Sales Tax

Sotheby’s is currently registered to collect sales tax in the following states: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin and Wyoming. For any property collected or purchased at the New York City office, all sales tax will be due on this transaction.

Why Sotheby’s is Not Required to Collect Sales Tax

Sotheby’s is not required to collect sales tax on property delivered to states other than those listed above. The property is delivered to a state where Sotheby’s is not required to collect sales tax, i.e., it is the responsibility of the purchaser to self-assess any sales or use tax and remit it to the appropriate authorities in that state.

Sotheby’s Arranged Shipping

If the property is delivered into any state in which Sotheby’s is registered, Sotheby’s is required by law to collect and remit the appropriate sales or use tax on behalf of the consignor.

Client Arranged Shipping

Property collected from Sotheby’s New York office is not permitted and any arrangement for purchase by consignor’s client of the common carrier hired by the purchaser for delivery of an administrative fee (not subject to New York State Tax), but if the property is delivered into any state in which Sotheby’s is registered, Sotheby’s is required by law to collect and remit the appropriate sales or use tax on behalf of the consignor.

Important Notices

Important Notice to Purchasers: Sotheby’s New York office is open on a limited basis by appointment only. Sotheby’s representatives working at this time during this season will be processed through Post Sales Services as per usual business procedures. All checks made payable to Sotheby’s. Payment for property will be handled by Post Sales Services in coordination with purchasers after the auction. Invoices will be issued to the successful party, which will include total purchase price, payment options, and next steps on delivery. Payment is due immediately.

Property Collection

All collections and deliveries for purchased property will be handled by Post Sales Services in coordination with purchasers after the auction. Invoices will be issued to the successful party, which will include total purchase price, payment options, and next steps on delivery. Payment is due immediately.

Property Payment

All property must be paid for before collection or release from any Sotheby’s location. Payment must be made through Sotheby’s New York Post Sales Services by way of our accepted modes of payment methods mentioned on your invoice. To arrange for payment, please contact Post Sales Services at 212-606-7444 or USPostSaleServices@sothebys.com. Payment will not be accepted at the off-site facility. Dealers and resale clients should fill out the appropriate forms where applicable and contact Post Sales Services with any questions.

Loss and Liability

Unless otherwise agreed by Sotheby’s, all sold property must be removed from Sotheby’s premises no later than 30 calendar days after the close of the auction. Buyers are reminded that Sotheby’s is liable for loss or damage to sold property under the following circumstances:

- 30 calendar days after the close of the auction.

Notice Regarding Endangered Species

Property containing certain endangered species will require a CITES license upon export from the U.S. and may require an additional license upon import into another country. There is no guarantee that such licenses will be granted. In the case of denial of any license or of delay in obtaining such licenses, the purchaser remains responsible for making on-time payment for the total purchase price.

Photography:
Eliot Penzo
Jon Lami