



Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum Melanesia Collection



COLLECTIONS LEVEL DESCRIPTION

Data Entry form

Title of the Collection	Melanesia collection, Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum
Author(s)	Eve Haddow
Curator responsible for collection (if different from author)	Collections Manager, Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum
Date Completed	2 nd December 2014
<p>There are 125 items from Melanesia including the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and New Caledonia.</p> <p>There are seventy-four artefacts from Vanuatu dating from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The collection includes a man's woven pandanus waist mat of a style associated with Efate island, a turtleshell arm ornament and an arm or leg ornament of shell beads on woven plant fibre associated with grade taking ceremonies in central Vanuatu. Sixty-one items can be categorised as arms and armour, including seven wooden clubs mostly of styles associated with Erromango island. Two clubs have attachments of human hair. There are also forty-four arrows and seven spears including fishing spears. The majority of items from Vanuatu were acquired in 1930 from Mrs J Stevenson-Stuart who is likely to be associated with a missionary. A gourd for carrying water with a carrier of coconut binding from this donor was previously attributed to Vanuatu but is of a style associated with the Loyalty Islands, New Caledonia.</p> <p>From the Solomon islands are twenty-three fish hooks of shell and turtle shell, some with glass bead lures. In addition to sixteen arrow and two spears, there is a paddle club which has a blade incised with a frigate bird and human figure. There is a bag of woven banana fibre with attachments of leaves from Santa Cruz, probably from the late 19th century.</p> <p>There are fifteen items from Papua New Guinea. Most items are stylistically from south east New Guinea and eight were acquired in 1885 from a Mrs J Burns of Brisbane, Australia. The collection includes a waisted shield covered with woven cane and adorned with feathers, a ceremonial greenstone axe, and a woman's skirt. There is an over-modelled human skull believed to be from East Sepik province. From the Admiralty islands is a forehead ornament of clam shell overlaid with cut turtleshell.</p>	
Have any aspects of the collection been published? Please provide bibliographic references if available.	
<i>(1934), Catalogue of Collections in the Picture Galleries and Museum of the Smith Institute of Stirling, 3rd edition. Stirling: A Learmonth & Son</i>	