

PACIFICA EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE BOX

ED.1978.28.5

Carved wood “tiki” (god) from Hawaii. This is a modern carving for the tourist market probably depicting Maui, the Hawaiian god of war. In the mid-1900s the tiki form was used on a wide variety of forms, including molded ceramic mugs and was quite a popular motif in the 1950s and 60s.

ED.1985.53.1 a,b

Two coconut shell “cups” from Samoa in the 1920s. Before products such as glass, ceramic or metal eating dishes were widely available, the native people of the Pacific Islands used parts of the coconut palm extensively. Here the inner shell of the coconut fruit has been smoothed and polished. The leaves (fronds) and trunk of the coconut palm were used as well. The outer husk of the coconut fruit was stripped into fibrous material (coir) and spun into twine and rope.

ED.1991.21.2 a-i

Fragments of Hawaiian tapa cloth made by peeling the inner bark of the paper mulberry plant and beating it with wooden tools. These fragments are over 150 years old and very fragile so we ask that you keep them in their plastic bags to handle and view them. If you hold them to the light, you can see the marks left by the wooden beaters that had designs carved in the. Some are painted and others are printed with decorative geometric designs. Before European and American explorers and traders arrived in the islands, tapa was used extensively for clothing, bedding and other household purposes throughout Polynesia. Once steady trade began, commercially woven fabric replaced the traditional uses of this cloth and the art of making it is almost extinct in Hawaii though it continues to be made in other areas of the Pacific.

Ed.1997.24.19

Length of cotton/polyester blend fabric printed in traditional Polynesian tapa cloth designs. Traditionally these designs might be hand painted or stenciled onto the fabric. Here they have been commercially printed by a rotary screen process. There is enough yardage here to wrap one of the traditional “pareau” women’s garments worn throughout Polynesia, but especially associated with Tahiti.

ED.2005.1.83

Circular piece of painted tapa cloth with geometric designs.

ED.2005.1.145 a,b

Carved wood Maori tikis (supernatural beings) with shell inlay eyes from New Zealand. The protruding tongues on these tiki carvings are a typical form of Maori Greeting (sticking one’s tongue out is not considered an insult as it is here in the U.S.!).

ED.2005.1.172

Miniature carving of the giant heads found on Easter Island. Made of black lava rock. Scientists have long been puzzled as to the exact purpose of these heads, though most feel they were erected to petition supernatural forces for aid.

ED.2005.1.197

Bird woven from split palm leaf. Throughout the Pacific Islands, the coconut palm is used for a variety of purposes, not just for food. The leaves are used to

- weave mats, baskets, hats and other objects. This bird is just for decoration.
- ED.2005.1.428
Strip of painted tapa cloth with design of ducks or birds with geometric borders.
- ED.2005.3.26
Placement made from painted tapa cloth from the islands of the kingdom of Tonga. Small pieces such as this are popular items to sell to tourists for souvenirs (see #ED.1991.21.2 a-i for explanation of the process)
- ED.2005.3.27
Tapa placemat from the island of Fiji with both block-printed and painted floral designs in black and rust on white.
- ED.2005.58.1 a-c
Shell brooches from the Philippine Islands, but typical of the extensive use of shells throughout the Pacific Islands where they are made into all sorts of jewelry and also ornament basketry and other household goods.
- ED.2006.1.1 a-e
Five single strand necklaces made with shells. These are typical of tourist souvenirs brought home from a trip to Hawaii and are often given as promotional items by major vendors in the islands, like Hilo Hattie. Necklaces (a & b) are made with gold ring cowries which were a popular trade item for many centuries. The other necklaces use periwinkle-type shells. Shells are used for many personal items by Pacific Islanders including headbands, bracelets, anklets, hat bands as well as for decorating baskets, etc.
- ED.2006.1.2
Model of an outrigger canoe of the type used extensively in Polynesia and Micronesia for transportation between islands.
- ED.2006.1.84 a,b
Model of outrigger canoe (a) with paddle (b) painted yellow and black on hull.
- ED.2006.1.166
Doll made of painted papier maché on wood base. This doll shows a typical style of wrapped dress, called a pareau (pa-ree-ow) in Tahiti, which was and is common throughout the Pacific Islands. Flower leis and hair ornaments are also popular adornments and often carry symbolic meaning. For example, placing the flower behind your ear can either mean you are married or single, depending on which ear you place it behind.
- ED.2006.1.381
Small rectangular bag made of plain woven palm leaves set on the diagonal. Metal eyelets, a modern touch, protect the holes at the top which hold the carrying cords from getting worn through. Palm leaves are used throughout the Pacific Islands to weave sitting and sleeping mats and a wide variety of useful objects.