

MOSMAN MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

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PRESS RELEASE

Date:	13 May 2010
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Pasifika Communities Showcase their Culture at Mosman Art Gallery 5 June – 18 July, 2010

Talking Tapa: Pasifika Bark Cloth in Queensland is a traveling exhibition that showcases Pacific Islander heritage. With a growing number of Pacific Islanders settling in Australia and an increasing awareness of Australia's Pacific neighbours, it is timely that a major exhibition of tapa (hand made bark cloth) has been developed and is now touring across Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria.

Tapa is synonymous with the Pacific Islands, however now plays a significant part in Australian cultural traditions. Tapa's physical qualities and uses vary greatly throughout the Pacific, from utilitarian and everyday use for clothing, mats, blankets and as a unit of currency, to extensive ceremonial purposes in weddings, funerals and initiations. Tapa now appears regularly in meeting halls, at performances, weddings and funerals and in the homes of these relatively new migrants to our shores.

In the exhibition, Fijian wedding outfits vie with Papuan New Guinean ceremonial skirts and cloaks and unusual tapa clothing from Wallis and Futuna. Very large Tongan pieces serve many functions and have been passed from family to family, depending on needs within the Pacific Diaspora. Loincloths and headdresses from the Solomon Islands and bark cloth lengths from Erromongo,

Please note all information is correct at time of release

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Vanuatu remind us of those 'blackbirded' labour recruits of yesteryear, whose descendants now form a significant community in Queensland.

While most tapa is made from the inner bark (bast) of the paper mulberry tree, fig and breadfruit are also represented in this exhibition. The oldest bark cloth in the show is from Futuna Island and dates from the 1860s, whilst the latest was acquired in the Solomons in September 2008. Tapa decoration draws on clan and family patterning, the spirit world, the plant, bird, animal and fish kingdoms, abstract and geometric designs, as well as historical events and representations.

Talking Tapa offers an opportunity to view traditional and contemporary Pasifika design and to learn more about Australia's Pacific neighbours and migrant communities. There is a comprehensive 88 page full-colour catalogue and extensive didactic panels that draw on the cultural knowledge of Pasifika communities and scholarly research to place each work in its social and historical context.

The exhibition will be opened at the Mosman Art Gallery on Friday 4th of June at 6.30pm by Malaemie Fruean, former Chair of the NSW Pacific Council.

Special Event

"Sydney Cook Island Dance Group"

Friday 4th June, 6.30pm

Join the Gallery for a thrilling spectacle of traditional drumming and dance featuring 18 performers from the renowned Sydney Cook Island Dance Group. This special event is part of the official opening night program for **"Talking Tapa"** and **"Boxworld"** exhibitions, in The Grand Hall at Mosman Art Gallery. Bookings essential: (02) 9978 4178 Admission: \$10.00 adults, \$6.00 Friend/Concession.

Public Programs

"Barkcloth in Oceania: Dynamics of Ceremonial life, Spirituality and Utility"

Sunday 20th June 2010, 10.30am

Yvonne Carrillo-Huffman Collections Officer at the Australian Museum will present an overview into the cultural significance of TAPA, and its utilitarian and ceremonial uses across Melanesia, Polynesia and Micronesia. A main focus of interest for Yvonne is the role objects play in reviving and strengthening cultural identity and how they are re-interpreted into contemporary artworks.

Bookings essential: (02) 9978 4178. Talk to be followed by morning tea.

Talking Tapa is a national travelling exhibition presented by Brisbane Multicultural Arts Centre, curated by Joan G Winter and toured by Museum and Gallery Services Queensland. This exhibition is supported by Visions of Australia, an Australian Government Program supporting touring exhibitions by providing funding assistance for the development and touring of Australian cultural material across Australia. This project is also proudly funded by Queensland Government's Gambling Community Benefit Fund and Brisbane City Council.

Image captions

Left - Wallis and Fortuna – Nuku Village, Sigave District
Valeria Likuvalu
Ceremonial Robe made in the style of Mission Dress
c.1996

Right - Wallis and Fortuna – Nuku Village, Sigave District
Valeria Likuvalu
Tepi (men's skirt) c.1996

For further information contact:

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Mosman Art Gallery

Cnr Art Gallery Way and Myahgah Rd, Mosman (02) 9978 4178
Open 7 days 10 – 5 (closed public holidays)
Admission free



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