

1995

## Becoming art: some relationships between Pacific art and Western culture

Susan Cochrane  
*University of Wollongong*

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**BECOMING ART:  
SOME RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PACIFIC ART  
AND WESTERN CULTURE**

by

Susan Cochrane, B.A. [Macquarie], M.A.(Hons.) [Wollongong]



## ABSTRACT

---

This thesis is concerned with the art forms of the indigenous people of the South Pacific region and their reception in the Western art-culture system. Its particular concentration is on visual art forms produced by Papua New Guinea and Australian Aboriginal artists from the 1960s to the 1990s.

It emerges that the arts of indigenous peoples of the South Pacific region have accrued a history and place in the Western art-culture system in addition to the role they continue to play within their own societies. As well, while some art forms have maintained indigenous traditions, in many instances artists have changed their methods of production and introduced new types of art into their repertoire.

During the second half of the twentieth century there has been a profound change in Western attitudes towards the visual arts created by indigenous people of the South Pacific region. Significant shifts have occurred in the Western conceptualisation and categorisation of indigenous art. The thesis aims to explain, as far as possible, why changes have occurred in the indigenous arts of the South Pacific region and to make a contribution to the improved conceptualisation of this art.

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## DEDICATION

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