

Daughters of the Islands

Stories from the Marjorie King collection

Robert Sainsbury Library Exhibition – May 2017 - May 2018

'Daughters of the Islands' is a showcase of objects collected by Marjorie King between 1954 and 1968 during her term as Headmistress of Papauta School, a London Missionary Society girls school in Samoa founded in 1892. King was a member of The Women's Interest Project, which focused on the part women can play in the development of their community. These objects demonstrate the weaving, braiding and plaiting skills that the girls learned to uphold Samoan ways of life and were sold to tourists to help finance school costs.

A delicate hand plaited natural fibre belt decorated with a purple and turquoise geometric pattern. Size 80 x 35 cm. SRU2004MK90

Finely woven fan in the Tuvalu style with white feather rim. Two concentric brown - black circles or teardrop shaped rings are woven on both faces of fan. Handle is woven in a checkerboard fashion with alternating natural and brown - black fibres. Size 39 x 28 cm. SRU2004MK112

A shell necklace with two layers of shells woven into the design that closes with a shell clasp. This necklace demonstrates the versatility of weaving techniques used in personal adornment. Size 21 x 28 cm. SRU2004MK72

Daughters of the Islands (1944) Evelyn R Downs. A monograph describing life at Papauta Girls school, Samoa. Signed by author to Miss King and includes a photograph and drawing of the building.

A pair of slippers (MK44) and a purse or wallet (MK42) made of Pandanus fibre and barkcloth. Barkcloth is made from Mulberry trees, which were grown and processed on the schools plantation by the students. Size 26 x 30 cm. SRU2004MK44. Size 16 x 11cm. SRU2004MK42

A small finely woven basket in the form of a box. This bag was obtained during the 1961 Women's Interests training seminar in Apia, Western Samoa, which aimed to promote the civic training of women through individual and communal education. Size 10 X 21 X 12 cm. SRU2004MK40

Hand plaited Pandanus palm satchel bag decorated with purple and natural fibre checkerboard pattern. Gifted to Miss Marjorie King by Olivea Fekusone, former Papauta student and wife to an LMS missionary to the Fly River Delta, Papua New Guinea. Size 30 x 30 x 90 cm. SRU2004MK67

This woven carrier conceals a hollowed-out coconut shell, used to carry water. Rather than a stopper, the carrier has a separate woven lid, adorned with shells. The light colour of the natural fibre is contrasted by four dyed purple diamonds. Size 17 x 12 cm. SRU2004MK132

This display was curated by the Sainsbury Research Unit MA students: Benjamina Dadzie, Maya Cardwell, Emily Shorter, Lynne Harper, Lydia Fisher and Rachael Minott in March 2017 in association with the Robert Sainsbury Library Bursary.

Marjorie King generously donated her collection to the Robert Sainsbury Library in 2004 which now forms part of the Sainsbury Research Unit's Teaching Collection.