

# Tourist Treasures

Robert Sainsbury Library Exhibition – May 2018 - May 2019

Tourist art generally refers to objects that have been inspired by a culture’s traditional style, but made especially for tourists and their tastes. This display aims to complicate this definition by including gifts and objects bought and used by locals. Although it is often made by the same craftspeople as traditional arts, many curators and collectors see tourist art as inferior. Therefore museums and galleries have cast these treasures aside, even though they are highly valuable to the people who own them.

This exhibition aims to show off these objects, which have spent most of their lives in the store-rooms and offices of the Sainsbury Centre. By putting them in this display case, they can enjoy the same kind of attention as other artworks enshrined in glass cases.

The objects here come from all over the world, from a Fijian kava bowl to a Mexican beaded bird to an Indonesian puppet, representing the international connections of the Sainsbury Centre. Each have had different lives – some were bought by researchers working abroad, while others were gifts from colleagues and students.

We hope you enjoy looking at and learning about these treasures – please see the labels for more information on each object.

<p><b>Puppet</b>          India          Mixed fabrics (inc. silk), wood, paint, foil          Date unknown          Maker/s unknown          Collected and donated by Professor Raymond Firth          SRU2007-1</p>	<p>Bhat communities of Rajasthan, North-West India, have used Kathputli puppets like this one for as long as 1000 years, according to folk histories. Performances were set to music, sometimes showing off the achievements or ancestral heritage of wealthy families, or educating audiences about moral and social issues. Kathputli puppets are still used in India today as an educational tool. Although this puppet was made for the tourist market, it is indistinguishable from puppets made for performances in Rajasthan.</p>
<p><b>Wooden Tiki Figure</b>          Cook Islands          Wood          20<sup>th</sup> Century          Maker/s unknown          Collected in 1977 and loaned by Professor Steven Hooper</p>	<p>Small carvings of this god, popularly known as ‘tiki’, are sold as souvenirs throughout Polynesia. In many Polynesian cultures, tiki were believed to allow gods or ancestors to appear and provide blessings. This tiki was bought at a tourist shop in Avarua, Rarotonga, Cook Islands, which was full of similar sculptures. It is based on older figures collected from Rarotonga, like the one displayed in the Sainsbury gallery (UEA 189). Objects that represent non-Christian religious beliefs are often very appealing to Western tourists, even if these traditional religions are no longer practiced.</p>
<p><b>Duck Shaped kava bowl</b>          Fiji          Wood          20<sup>th</sup> century          Maker/s unknown          Collected in 1990 and loaned by Professor Steven Hooper</p>	<p>This object is a miniature model of a kava bowl in the Fiji Museum, and is similar to one displayed in the Sainsbury gallery (UEA 912). Kava, or yaqona, is a mildly sedative drink made from the root of the kava plant. The kava ceremony, in which people share the drink while sitting in a circle around a large bowl, spread to Fiji from Tonga in the eighteenth century. They are still practiced today, including at the Fiji-hosted 2017 COP23 Climate Conference. Although this bowl is too small to be used, it is a souvenir of global encounters between people past.</p>

<p><b>Pair of peg dolls</b> Fiji Wooden pegs, pandanus leaf, hibiscus fibre, barkcloth 21<sup>st</sup> century Maker/s unknown Collected in 2013 and loaned by Professor Steven Hooper</p>	<p>These two small dolls, made using traditional Fijian materials were bought by Professor Hooper at the Hibiscus festival. This is a very popular cultural festival and carnival that is held annually in Fiji's capital city, Suva, and currently sponsored by Vodafone. Events like this continue to develop and expand in a globalised world, and are key spaces for artists to access different markets and display their work to both local and international audiences.</p>
<p><b>Barkcloth calendar</b> Samoa Barkcloth, pigment, natural fibre, printed paper 1950s Maker/s unknown Collected by Marjorie King Donated by Jane Sandland SRU2004MK45</p>	<p>This piece showcases the traditional Pacific Island art of barkcloth making and painting. A 1958 calendar has been attached to create a small, portable souvenir that would appeal to tourists. It was made at a missionary school for girls in Samoa, where pupils were encouraged to practice traditional crafts that could be sold to fund the school. The barkcloth itself was made from mulberry trees which students grew and processed on the school grounds. It was collected by Marjorie King who was headmistress from 1954-1968.</p>
<p><b>Vessel of squatting figure carrying water</b> Mexico Clay, glaze 20<sup>th</sup> century Maker/s unknown Collector unknown Donated by Jane Bevington SCVA006</p>	<p>This pot is an imitation of ceramics found in Colima on Mexico's west coast, dating from around 100 BC – AD 250. Mexico is famous for its ancient arts, and is popular with tourists who want to visit archaeological sites as well as enjoy the beaches and warm climate. Many ceramics have been illegally looted from ancient tombs and sold on the world art market. This object has 'MEXICO' inscribed on the base to show that it is a reproduction, and may have been made specifically for tourists to help discourage looting as well as to profit from demand for ceramics.</p>
<p><b>Beaded bird</b> Mexico Plastic beads, glue, plastic/wood 21<sup>st</sup> century Maker/s unknown Collected by Maria Toledo in 2013 Loaned by Professor Steven Hooper</p>	<p>This bird combines the traditional beadwork of the indigenous Huichol people with the eagle, a symbol of Mexico based on Aztec legend. Plastic beads are used today, but in the past they were made of bone, turquoise, coral or pyrite. The beads are fixed to a wooden or plastic core with wax, resin or glue. Today, beadwork is an important source of income for Huichol people. This bird was a gift to Steven Hooper from MA student Ms Maria Toledo, so we do not know if it was made by a Huichol artist. Traditional arts are sometimes copied and sold to tourists, which can cause economic and cultural damage to indigenous groups.</p>
<p><b>Gold plaque</b> Peru Gold-coloured metal alloy, soapstone 21<sup>st</sup> century Maker/s unknown Collected by Mr Mirko Brito in 2016 Loaned by Dr. George Lau</p>	<p>This plaque is decorated with a crested feline, which was an important supernatural big cat in the ancient Recuay culture of Peru (AD 100 – AD 700). Although Recuay people did work metal, they did not make plaques like this one, which was made for the tourist market. Mr Mirko Brito, a student and tourist art stall-holder in Peru, gave the plaque as a special gift to Dr Lau to thank him for his help with a thesis on Recuay textiles. Like the cowrie shell necklaces, this shows how souvenirs can create and represent international connections.</p>

<p><b>Ashtray</b> Ethiopia Metal alloy 20<sup>th</sup> century Maker/s unknown Collected by Dr John Salter Donated by Mrs Pamela Salter SRU1991S38</p>	<p>The elephant decoration on this ashtray reflects both wildlife tourism and the bustling ivory trade in Ethiopia and other African countries until a global ban on the trade in 1990. Ivory was a popular souvenir for wealthier tourists, but this metal ashtray would have been cheaper to buy. It shows the influence of tourist tastes on the kinds of objects that were made and sold as souvenirs, as it was not made for Ethiopian households. An ashtray would have been a useful addition to a Western home, while its small size meant it would have been easy to transport.</p>
<p><b>Hei tiki keyring</b> Auckland, New Zealand Plastic 21<sup>st</sup> Century Maker/s unknown Collected and loaned by Dr Karen Jacobs</p>	<p><i>Hei tikis</i> are human figures that Maori men and women wear around the neck. <i>Hei tikis</i> made from greenstone were traded with Europeans from at least the eighteenth century, like the example in the Sainsbury gallery (UEA 184). They made the perfect memento for passing travellers because they were small and easy to transport. Although their original meanings have been lost, today Maori people wear <i>hei tiki</i> as a celebration of their cultural identity. They have become a wider symbol of New Zealand, and are even made into souvenirs, like this plastic keyring. Tourism in a globalised world has led to the <i>hei tiki</i> taking on new meanings.</p>
<p><b>Two carved figures with fish</b> Africa ( Kenya or Zimbabwe) Wood, stain 20<sup>th</sup> century Maker/s unknown Collector unknown Donated by Mrs Leather SRU1985L9</p>	<p>This sculpture was found in the attic of a house, so although it might have been bought as a holiday souvenir in Africa, it could also have been bought in a shop in the UK. It was donated to the Sainsbury Research Unit teaching collection after it was assessed as ‘tourist art’, rather than the more valuable ‘tribal art’. This is because it was made especially for the European tourist market, even though the same artist may have also have made ‘tribal art’. Today Kenyan wood-carving for tourists is an important global industry that employs 80,000 people.</p>
<p><b>Demon Mask</b> Indonesia/Sri Lanka Wood/paint 20<sup>th</sup> century Maker/s unknown Collector unknown</p>	<p>This mask was bought in Norwich, so its origins are a mystery. It is probably a Balinese demon mask that was made for the tourist market in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Traditionally, they were worn in <i>topeng</i> or <i>barong</i> dance performances that narrated myths or moral stories, and were considered sacred until they became popular with tourists. However, this object has been labelled as <i>raksha</i>, a word more commonly associated with demon masks of Sri Lanka. While this may incorrect labelling, it could also point to the longstanding influence of both countries’ religious and artistic traditions on each other.</p>
<p><b>Woven basket</b> Fiji Coconut leaves, pandanus leaves, hibiscus cord March 1979 Made by Salote Druma of Naikeleyaga village, Kabara Island, Lau, Fiji Collected in 1979 and loaned by Professor Steven Hooper</p>	<p>The photograph ( taken by Professor Hooper during fieldwork) shows the maker, Salote Druma seated among the long dried leaves of the pandanus tree. She is training young girls in the traditional Fijian weaving techniques used to make the baskets, passing on knowledge through practice. As in many other places around the world, a popular tourist activity is to watch craftspeople, like Salote, engaged in traditional arts and crafts. In some countries, these techniques are now rarely practised day-to-day, but are still performed for tourists.</p>

<p><b>Cowrie Shell necklaces</b>  Fiji  Cowrie shell, hibiscus fibre  21<sup>st</sup> century  Maker/s unknown  Collected by Dr Maia Nuku in February 2006  Loaned by Dr. Karen Jacobs</p>	<p>These two necklaces were made in Fiji but purchased as souvenirs at the International Market Place at Waikiki beach, Honolulu, Oahu, Hawai'i. Dr Nuku (Oceania curator, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) and Dr. Jacobs were visiting Hawai'i for an academic conference, and these necklaces were given to Dr. Jacobs's daughters. In the past, cowrie necklaces in Fiji were sacred and would only have been worn by priests or chiefs. These necklaces show how the meanings of objects change over time through interactions between different cultures. They also highlight the important role that souvenirs can play in developing relationships through gift-giving.</p>
<p><b>Cigarette tin with ancient Egyptian ceramics</b>  Ceramic, mineral paint, metal  Ceramics: c.1<sup>st</sup> century AD / tin: c.1940s  Maker/s unknown  Collected by Dr. John Salter  Donated by Mrs Pamela Salter  SRU1991S19</p>	<p>There are eight small pendants collected inside this mass-produced cigarette tin, which has 'Egypt 1945' scratched into the lid by hand. The pendants are real antiquities and were not made for the tourist market. Six are in the shape of an Ankh, the symbol of life, which are popularly known as an emblem of ancient Egypt. Although the pendants are not tourist art, they were collected in the tin as a personal souvenir. Today, removing objects like these from their country of origin would be illegal.</p>

This exhibition was curated by students on the MA in the Arts of Africa, Oceania and the Americas: Tony Smith, James Finch, Isabel Wilken-Smith, Gabriela Lopez, Josie Howl, Jaclyn Kline, Rhys Madden, Lily Rice, Federica Villa and Heather Johnson. Support and advice was provided by SRU Faculty Dr. Karen Jacobs, and Librarian and Research Services Manager Pat Hewitt