



# **Living Spirits With Fixed Abodes: The Masterpieces Exhibition Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery**

*Barry Craig, Mark Busse, Soroi Eoe*

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On the eve of Papua New Guinea's attainment of independence from Australia, Chief Minister Michael Somare referred to the new nation's cultural treasures as "living spirits with fixed abodes." He was referring to the prevailing belief of Papua New Guineans that everything is invested with spirit, not least the objects carved, modeled, or constructed for ceremonial, and often everyday, use. The Masterpieces Exhibition includes the most significant cultural treasures on display at the Papua New Guinea's national museum. This book gives the reader a thorough account of each of the exhibition's 209 pieces. An introduction aims to give the general reader an idea of the significance of the objects and how they are to be understood. Other chapters provide a brief history of the museum and its role in forging national identity. Editor Barry Craig sets the individual works in their local context with historical and field photographs. The objects are dealt with under various headings: Watercraft, Architecture, Household Items, Gardening and Fertility Figures, Hunting and Warfare, Musical Instruments, Masks and Mortuary Objects.

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