

PACIFIC ISLANDS

**Tapa Cloth***Fig. 54*

Mulberry bark
Fiji, 1977-79
36" x 38"

To make Tapa cloth, the soft inner bark (bast) of the Mulberry tree is peeled off the tree and stripped from the outer bark. Pounding the bast thins it, and after it dries it can be decorated with plant dyes. Black dye is made of the charcoal from one kind of tree, red from the seeds of another. Yellow can be obtained from turmeric root and purple from the sap of banana trees. Traditional designs are geometric. Some are created with dye-covered stamps, others are painted freehand. The staff of the Teachers College at Nasinu commissioned this piece from local women, as a gift to Scot Simpson on his departure from Fiji in 1979. The inscription reads *Loloma* (thinking of you). N.T.C. stands for Nasinu Teachers College.

Collection of Scot Simpson, Fiji 1977-79



Preparation for a Feast (signed) Reuer Charlie Gibbons

Fig. 55

Ink, water color on paper
Palau, c. 1982

The Republic of Palau is a small island nation east of the Philippines. It was traditionally a matrilineal society, where land and titles passed through the female line. The island was fought over during World War II, becoming an American protectorate until independence. This painting depicts an idyllic village scene with fruitful trees and people busily preparing for a feast, cauldrons ready for pigs and fish.

Collection of Rich Lackey, Yap, Micronesia 1982-84

Story Board

(signed) PJD

Fig. 56

Wood
Fais Island, Yap

Carvings like this one tell the founding mythology of the island people of Yap. This one illustrates a group of fishermen pulling the earth (Fais Island) out of the ocean.

Collection of Ed Brettin
Fais Island, Micronesia 1982-84



Knife
Carryalls
Lava-lavas
Octopus
Hooks

Fig. 57



Metal
Woven grass
Yap

Utilitarian items like these were used by working men in Yap during the 1980s, when they were acquired by their current owner. The long horizontal carryalls were used to transport tools from one location to another. *Lava-lavas* are grass skirts. Knives were multipurpose tools, used as fishing and cleaning implements among other functions. The long hooks with handles were used to pull an octopus out of a hiding place where it retreated to avoid capture. The current owner used them in just that way during fishing expeditions in Yap.

Collection of Rick Lackey, Yap 1982-84



Utilitarian Items

Fig. 58

**Woven textiles, metal, cane
Philippines, Yap**

In this array are some implements necessary to lives based on agriculture, fishing, and gathering. The Philippines, a chain of islands between the Pacific Ocean and South China Sea, are home to immigrant settlers speaking a number of local languages. The arts incorporate and blend a variety of influences from decorative Muslim geometric patterns to Hispanic realism to colorful folk designs based on body adornment. The woven textiles are from the Ifugao tribe, near Baguio City, circa 1975.

The knife and scabbard combine different materials in a decorative manner. Wood, metal and bone are some components of this ornate but indispensable utilitarian tool obtained in Yap in the early 1980s.

The most common use of the basket made in Siquijor was for fishing at low tide. “People walked in the shallow reef when the moon was bright with this kind of basket hooked to their belts or on a sling over one shoulder. They’d fish for anything that moved in the reef. If it moved, swam or darted out from someplace, they would chop it with the *sundang* (knife). Anything collected was put into the basket, taken home and cooked. Small squids (*nukos*) were almost always in the mix and when cooked they would squirt ink into the soup giving it a dark black color.” – *Jim Good*

Collections of Tom Kenney (textiles), Philippines 1975-77

Jim and Laura Good (basket), Philippines 1982-84

Rick Lackey (knife), Yap 1982-84

Philippines



Hand Drill

Fig. 59

Wood
Philippines, 22½"

This is a home-made copy of a push drill often called a Yankee Drill, made by the Stanley hardware company in the US and sold world-wide. The user pushes down on the barrel. That spins the shaft back and forth thanks to spiral grooves carved in the shaft. It can insert screws in wood, or a drill bit can be put in the chuck to drill holes. It was often used to pre-drill holes in bamboo so it could be nailed without splitting. It is hand carved and lubricated with candle-wax. The barrel part is carved then split into two pieces, and the inside carved to fit the grooved shaft. It is re-glued, and bound with fish line to hold it all together. Only one man on the island made these drills, and they had to be ordered several months in advance. A drill like this was usually a show-piece in most skilled carpenters' toolboxes. Jim had this one made since he sometimes worked with the carpenters and admired this locally-made tool.

Collection of Jim and Laura Good, Philippines 1982-84



Bolo Knife

Fig. 60

Metal, wood
19½" long
Siquijor, Philippines

"A *bolo*, or in the Visayan language spoken in Siquijor, a *sundang*, is an all-purpose knife used for everything—chopping down bananas, cutting brush, cutting off fish heads, opening coconuts, digging roots. Farmers, fishermen and carpenters carried these knives all the time. They also hung in every kitchen. People took pride in getting a good blade. I was advised in buying, 'When you pluck

the thin edge with your fingernail it should sing like a bell.' This one did and I bought it. The next step was to find a carpenter/craftsman to fit a handle to it. The wood is from a local shrub on the island that splits once, right down the middle of the branch as it dries. The halves of the dried wood are considered split-proof. The craftsman carved the handle from one of the halves and fitted the handle to the blade. When I picked it up from him, he advised me how to make the scabbard, which I carved myself from a scrap of wood on a school construction site." — Jim Good

Collection of Jim and Laura Good, Philippines 1982-84