

BRIGHT: Artefacts, clockwise from left, an enamelled panel, worn on the chest as an amulet; a woman's velvet belt with gilt bronze and carved coral buckle; a necklace using the legs and antennae of beetles; a man's head ornament; a man's waist belt and an initiated man's pendant in the shape of a boar's head.

Gem of a book on ethnic art

By Diana Streak

Diamonds and gold are among today's most cherished materials for jewellery but the age-old proclivity for personal adornment and human resourcefulness has led people to fashion items from whatever comes to hand.

In her impressive book *Ethnic Jewellery and Adornment* author Truus Daalder offers a comprehensive look at the universal need societies have to adorn themselves for various reasons.

People use all manner of items to create accessories for nearly every body part. Head-gear, breastplates, necklaces, rings, brooches, earrings and bracelets all feature in the book. They may have been created to ward off evil spirits, to symbolise status or just to look good. The range of substances and objects used is testament to human ingenuity.

There is silver, coral, copper, enamel and amber. There are also shells, feathers, bone, teeth and vividly coloured insects.

The book focuses on Oceania, Asia and parts of the Middle East and Africa. It begins with a section on Australian Aboriginal adornment, much of which Daalder says has become almost extinct.

"A lot of it has disappeared, particularly in the south-east," she says. "Some of the most beautiful pieces come from up north and Arnhemland where there were lots of birds and they use a lot of feathers which were absolutely magnificent but which also made them fragile."

Although most of the items in the Aboriginal chapter and about half of the Oceania section belong to the South Australian Museum, Daalder and her husband, Joost, have a collection of nearly 1000 items acquired over three decades. These feature in the bulk of the 400-page book which has over 700 photographs taken by her son, Jeremy Daalder. "Our collection and the museum's collection complemented each other very well," she says.

Given the range of countries from which their collection comes, it's surprising the Daalders claim they are not good travellers particularly to remote areas.

"Most of the pieces come from the capitals [of foreign cities] and the cities of the Western world. But it is also true that a lot of the best pieces have moved there and are no longer available in the societies," she says.

There are similar themes around the world. "It's very much a family of man. One thing that inspires people is fear. Amulets to ward off evil seem to be pretty much everywhere. For instance we have a Turkish belt shown in the book and between the coral there is just one blue stone and you think why? It's to ward off the evil eye, just that one blue touch to it, and blue because that was unusual as most people have dark eyes. But you find the same thing in Tibet and in Morocco. Apart from that, it is usually some kind of message sent to the group; I am a Muslim or a Hindu, I am a headhunter, I am a warrior, I am a bride."

Most of the items date from 1850 to 1950. In several communities traditional customs were abandoned and in some groups objects were only made for one particular ceremony (Aboriginal and much of New Guinea adornment). In other communities new jewellery was made for every bride and older pieces melted down (Middle East and India).

"The perishable nature of much of the adornment also contributed to the loss of much older material. Amulets, for instance, were so intensively worn that they fell apart or got very damaged," she says.

Choosing which thing of beauty should go on the cover was a real challenge. "We thought it should be Aboriginal. There is this wonderful hairpin with yellow feathers which some people thought we should use. But the trouble was that the pin would stick right into the letters, so we had to have an object that suited the page," she says.

Pride of place went to a bark armband from the Tiwi people of Melville Island.

Part of the motivation for the book was to create a personal record, a way that the Daalders could live with the objects most of which are in storage. "Apart from that it's for people who have an interest in tribal art and also as a reference book for modern jewellers and designers who are inspired by it."

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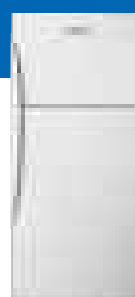
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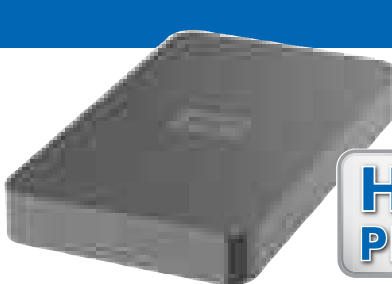
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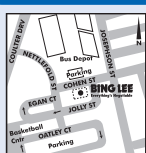


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Legal Aid ACT

Change of Address

Legal Aid ACT will close for business at its offices at 4 Mort Street Civic and 18 Corinna Street Woden at 12 noon on Friday, April 23 and will reopen at 2.00pm on Tuesday, April 27 at

2 ALLSOP STREET, CANBERRA CITY 2601 (Near Childers Street corner)

The postal address (GPO Box 512, Canberra City 2601) telephone number (6243 3411) email address (legalaid@legalaidACT.org.au) and DX (DX 5638) are unchanged.

For general enquiries about the relocation call (02) 6243 3475

10-04663/6

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ANU EVENTS CALENDAR

THURSDAY 22 APRIL 5.30-7PM
NEW GOVERNMENT POLICY APPROACHES FOR SHARING RISK: Innovative uses of income contingent loans for sharing risk in a range of policy areas, including for paid parental leave, mature aged training and R&D financing.

Professor Andrew Leigh, ANU Springbank Room
The (new) Crawford Building (behind Old Canberra House)
Lennox Crossing, Building 132, ANU
Drinks & light refreshments will be served
RSVP henry.keenan@anu.edu.au 6125 5559

THURSDAY 22 APRIL 6-7PM
ANU Public Lecture Series 2010
Research School of Earth Sciences and The Geological Society of Australia Present: GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE PAST

Dr Bradley Opdyke
President, ACT Division of the Geological Society of Australia
The Finkel Lecture Theatre
The John Curtin School of Medical Research
Garran Road, ANU
This lecture is free and open to the public
emma.matthews@anu.edu.au 02 6125 5504

WEDNESDAY 28 APRIL 1-2PM
The National Health Reform Series 'CAN LOCAL NETWORKS MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO PRIMARY HEALTH CARE?'
Facilitated by Mr Robert Wells
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The Finkel Lecture Theatre
The John Curtin School of Medical Research
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