



Embodied Spirits: Gope Boards from the Papuan Gulf

Virginia-Lee Webb

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In Papua New Guinea, “spirit boards,” also known as *gope*, were carved from wood by important men of an extended family or clan. Made from discarded canoes and usually decorated with carved and painted designs on one side, these boards vary greatly in style. At the turn of the 20th century, when most of the boards featured here were collected, men lived apart from women and uninitiated boys; their houses had designated areas or shrines created to display items, such as spirit boards, that indicated personal status and clan identity. *Embodied Spirits* is the first book devoted exclusively to spirit boards. Full-page photographs illustrate the boards of each region, and historical photographs show them in situ. The book also includes original essays by two noted scholars of Papuan Gulf art.

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