

UCSD's Grove Gallery to present crafts of Papua New Guinea

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Yams may just be another staple of your Thanksgiving dinner, but to the natives of Papua New Guinea, yams are objects to be worshiped.

Grove Gallery of the University of California, San Diego will present an exhibit of craft items entitled, "Babamini," from Nov. 7 through Dec. 2 in celebration of the Yam Festivals of Papua New Guinea.

In conjunction with the exhibition, Leslie Anne Martin, who has lived in and traveled extensively in the country, will present a slide lecture on Papua New Guinea, their crafts, and the Yam Festivals, at 5 p.m. Nov. 10 at the gallery.

In one of the most densely populated parts of Papua New Guinea, the Abelam tribe in the Maprik Wosera area is completely dependent upon babamini, or yams, as its staple crop. Ancestors and spirits are believed to be partners in the cultivation and success of the yam harvest, and ceremonies mark each stage of cultivation from planting to the celebration of the harvest, when the ancestors are thanked and masks affixed to yams are displayed.

The Grove Gallery exhibition will include photo enlargements of the native ceremonies and dance, and a variety of the yam festival crafts including masks, costumes, spears, bags, clay objects and wood carvings.

Grove Gallery is located in the Crafts Center on the UCSD campus. Gallery hours are Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Admission is free.

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