

ART TRIBAL

Les arts premiers magazine

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**THE OHLONE
TRIBAL PEOPLE OF THE
CALIFORNIA COAST**

**TRIBAL ART IN
SAN FRAN**

**A TRIBUTE TO
RAUL PATEL**

A Monumental Maori from Dalton Somare,
Photo David Cassera

Cassera

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THE OHLONE TRIBE

CENTRAL CALIFORNIA COAST NATIVES

The Ohlone people, also known as the Costanoan, are a Native American people of the central California coast. When Spanish explorers and missionaries arrived in the late 18th century, the Ohlone inhabited the area along the coast from San Francisco Bay through Monterey Bay to the lower Salinas Valley. At that time they spoke a variety of languages, the Ohlone languages, belonging to the Costanoan sub-family of the Utian language family, which itself belongs to the proposed Penutian language phylum or stock. The term "Ohlone" has been used in place of "Costanoan" since the 1970s by some descendant groups and by most ethnographers, historians, and writers of popular literature.

BEFORE SPANISH CONTACT

Some archeologists and linguists hypothesize that these people migrated from the San Joaquin-Sacramento River system and arrived into the San Francisco and Monterey Bay Areas in about the 6th century C.E. [Common Era], displacing or assimilating earlier Hokan-speaking populations of which the Esselen in the south represent a remnant. Datings of ancient shell mounds in Newark and Emeryville suggest the villages at those locations were established about 4000 B.C.E [before common era]

CULTURE

The Ohlone subsisted mainly as hunter-gatherers and in some ways harvesters. These food sources were abundant in earlier times and maintained by careful work (and spiritual respect), and through active management of all the natural resources at hand.

In general, along the bayshore and valleys, the Ohlone constructed dome-shaped houses of woven or bundled mats of tules, 6 to 20 feet (1.8 to 6 m) in diameter. In hills where Redwood trees were accessible, they built conical houses from Redwood bark attached to a frame of wood. Redwood houses were remembered in Monterey. One of the main village buildings, the sweat lodge was low into the ground, its walls made of earth and roof of earth and brush. They built boats of tule to navigate on the bays propelled by double-bladed paddles.

Generally, men did not wear clothing in warm weather. In cold weather, they might don animal skin capes or feather capes. Women commonly wore deerskin aprons, tule skirts, or shredded bark skirts. On cool days, they



also wore animal skin capes. Both wore ornamentation of necklaces, shell beads and abalone pendants, and bone wood earrings with shells and beads. The ornamentation often indicated status within their community.

RELIGION

The pre-contact Ohlone practiced shamanism. They believed that spiritual doctors could heal and prevent illness, and they had a "probable belief in bear shamans". Their spiritual beliefs were not recorded in detail by missionaries. However, some of the villages probably learned and practiced Kuksu, a form



Mission Life was different for the Ohlone tribe

of shamanism shared by many Central and Northern California tribes (although there is some question whether the Ohlone people learned Kuksu from other tribes while at the missions). Kuksu included elaborate acting and dancing ceremonies in traditional costume, an annual mourning ceremony, puberty rites of passage, shamanic intervention with the spirit world and an all-male society that met in subterranean dance rooms.

Kuksu was shared with other indigenous ethnic groups of Central California, such as their neighbors the Miwok and Esselen, also Maidu, Pomo, and northernmost Yokuts. However Kroeber observed less “specialized cosmogony” in the Ohlone, which he termed one of the “southern Kuksu-dancing groups”, in comparison to the Maidu and groups in the Sacramento Valley; he noted “if, as seems probable, the southerly Kuksu tribes (the Miwok, Costanoans, Esselen, and northernmost Yokuts) had no real society in connection with their Kuksu ceremonies.”

The conditions upon which the Ohlone joined the Spanish missions are subject to debate. Some have argued that they were forced to convert to Catholicism, while others have insisted that forced baptism was not recognized by the Catholic Church. All who have looked into the matter agree, however, that baptized Indians who tried to leave mission communities were forced to return. The first conversions to Catholicism were at

Mission San Carlos Borromeo, alias Carmel, in 1771. In the San Francisco Bay area the first baptisms occurred at Mission San Francisco in 1777. Many first-generation Mission Era conversions to Catholicism were debatably incomplete and “external.”

NARRATIVES AND MYTHOLOGY

Ohlone folklore and legend centered around the Californian culture heroes of the Coyote trickster spirit, as well as Eagle and Hummingbird (and in the Chochenyo

region, a falcon-like being named Kaknu). Coyote spirit was clever, wily, lustful, greedy, and irresponsible. He often competed with Hummingbird, who despite his small size regularly got the better of him.

Ohlone mythology creation stories mention the world was covered entirely in water, apart from a single peak Pico Blanco near Big Sur (or Mount Diablo in the northern Ohlone’s version) on which Coyote, Hummingbird, and Eagle stood. Humans were the descendants of Coyote.



Ohlone style woven hat



Japanese boxwood
okimono depicting
Ashinaga and
Tenaga, Meiji Period
(1868-1912)

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TRIBAL ART & SAN FRANCISCO

By David Cassera

The earliest archaeological evidence of human habitation of the territory of the city of San Francisco dates to 3000 BC. The Yelamu group of the Ohlone people resided in several small villages when a Spanish exploration party, led by Don Gaspar de Portolà arrived on November 2, 1769, the first documented European visit to San Francisco Bay. Seven years later, on March 28, 1776, the Spanish established the Presidio of San Francisco, followed by a mission, Mission San Francisco de Asís (Mission Dolores).

In 1776, colonists from Spain established a fort at the Golden Gate and a mission named for Francis of Assisi on the site. The California Gold Rush of 1849 propelled the city into a period of rapid growth, increasing the population in one year from 1,000 to 25,000, and thus transforming it into the largest city on the West Coast at the time. After three-



quarters of the city was destroyed by the 1906 earthquake and fire, San Francisco was quickly rebuilt, hosting the Panama-Pacific International Exposition nine years later. During World War II, San Francisco was the port of embarkation for service members shipping out to the Pacific Theater. After the war, the confluence of returning servicemen, massive immigration, liberalizing attitudes, and other factors (Vietnam) led to the Summer of Love and the gay rights movement, cementing San Francisco as a center of liberal activism in the United States.

San Francisco boasts several museums with notable collections of tribal art which are prime examples of the great level of public interest in these arts. The M. H. de Young Memorial Museum, commonly called simply the de Young



Museum, is a fine arts museum located in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park. It is named for early San Francisco newspaperman M. H. de Young.

The de Young African art collection includes more than 1,400 stellar examples from the eastern Sudan, the Guinea coast, west and central Africa, eastern and southern Africa,



and elsewhere on the continent. The African art collection is presented thematically rather than geographically, emphasizing the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the art.

The Oceanic collections were charter collections of the de Young, their nucleus formed in 1894 at the California Midwinter International Exposition in Golden Gate Park. Additional Oceanic works of sculpture, basketry, tapa, ceramics, and lithics have since been acquired, bringing the holdings to more than 3,000.

The Art of the Americas collections are of national significance to art history, anthropology, and world history, and they have helped establish the de Young as a primary source for cultural research and study. The extensive collection of ancient American and Native American art comprises nearly 2,000 works of art from Meso-America, Central and South America, and the West Coast of North America. Art from cultures indigenous to the American continents was a defining feature of the Museum's charter

collection and continues to be an area of significant growth.

A plethora of art galleries around San Francisco also offer rare and wonderful Modern art such as the

Weinstein Gallery who currently offers works from Chagall, Bauer, Calder, and Picasso just to name a few.

For decades this multi-cultural city has maintained an exciting tribal art scene that is comparable to New York. Each year patrons, collectors and dealers from all over the world converge on Fort Mason and Marin for the annual shows dedicated to the arts of Asia, Africa, Oceania and the Americas. This year sales were up and there were new faces as the tribal art business continues to evolve and attract new dealers and collectors.

Not only is San Francisco a prime place to visit to enjoy the arts, it is one of the world's most scenically beautiful cities, with culinary excellence and raging nightlife to boot...



Chris Boylan with masterpiece
photo MB Abram



Marcuson & Hall
photo David Cassera



Wenhua Liu from China
photo MB Abram



Hook Figure from Patrick & Ondine Mestdagh
photo David Cassera



A TEACHER, COLLECTOR & FRIEND

A TRIBUTE TO THE LATE RAHUL PATEL

It is a sad moment for all of us to bid final farewell to Rahul Patel. Rahul was a avid tribal art collector who lived life on his own terms and in his own style. He was a unique person in himself.

His brother Ambarish recalls he was a person with uncommon qualities even growing up as a child. He was not a follower or easily convinced into doing anything. He declined the comforts and security of a family life and chose to live the hard way, testing his uncommon skills at all times. He was a fearless bold and courageous person, motivating others, and attaining the goals and standards which he had mentally determined.

Rahul was an ace photographer whose work was exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. His photographic journeys took him from the remote tribal regions of Rajasthan, to the African Sahara. He documented the deadly Masai-Mara tribe of Kenya and the North American punk sub-culture as well as many other rare subjects.

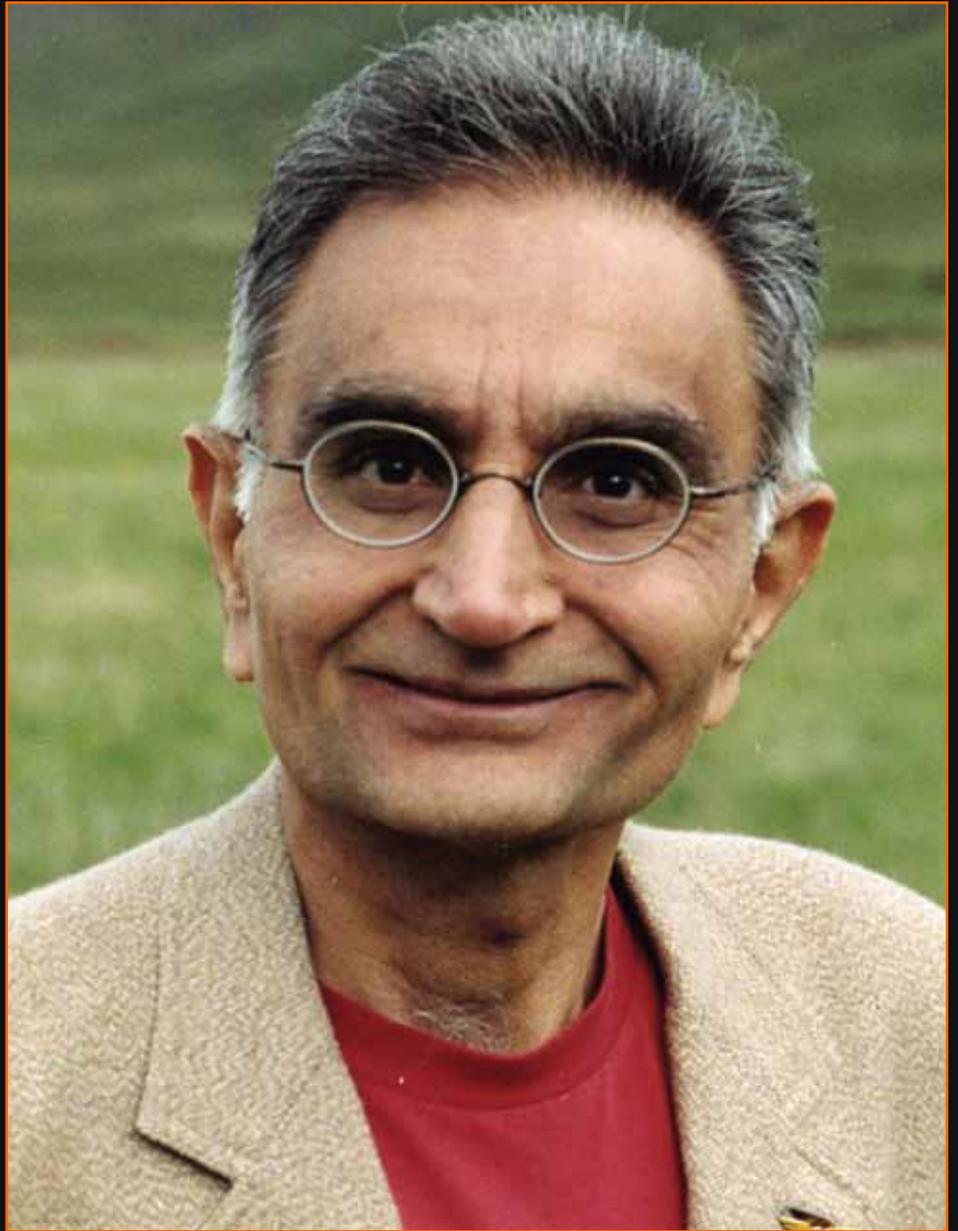
He later became a healer and authored books on Holistic Medicine. He collected books and had some of the rarest publications in his collection. He conducted seminars and workshops year round.

He was a Zen archer and at the age of 60 was awarded a Black Belt. Rahul was a religious guy and had immense Faith and belief in God. He had an amazing inner strength and conviction.

Rahul lived with the rarest of rare Diseases, which he faced and fought boldly. He survived a life threatening surgical procedure in London in 1987 where he nearly died on the operating Table. In 2010 he braved yet another major surgery, but it did not dissuade him in doing what he wanted. His Spirit and Morale is worth appreciating, as he wanted to live Life for 100 years.

Over the past few years Rahul never mentioned his illness to anyone. He received his black belt, he selflessly contributed many interesting to this publication, and he consistently reminded people of the power of a positive attitude. His articles on the Batak, Ganesha, the Inuit culture and Magical Amulets of the World were some of the best ART Tribal has ever known.

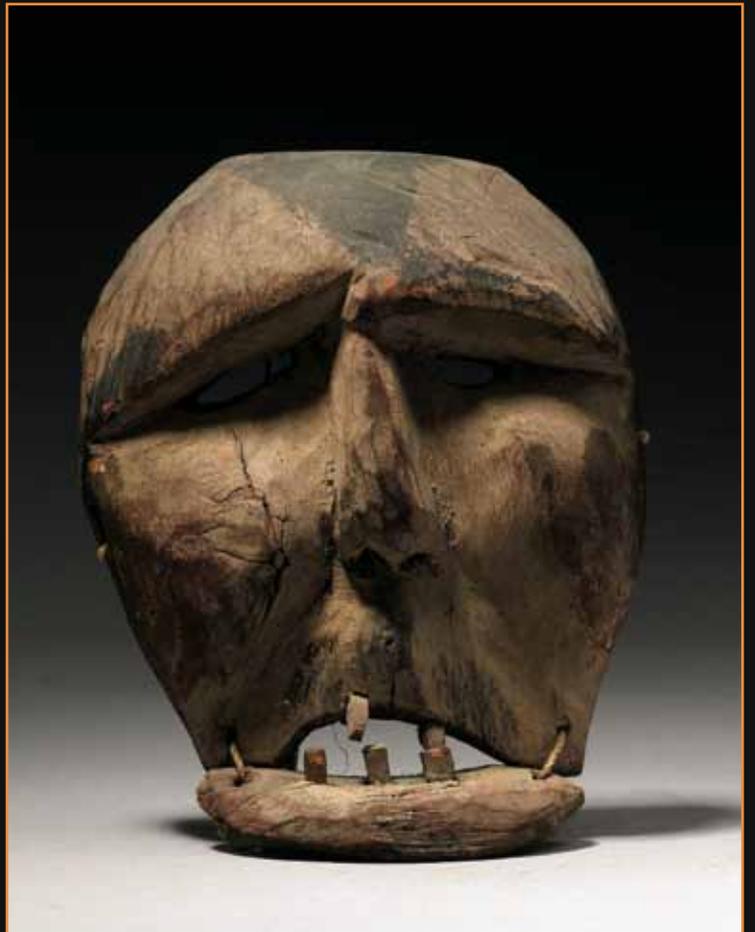
Rahul was an avid art Collector whose collection contains some of the best examples of authentic Asian and tribal art in existence. He loved attending Art Fairs especially San Francisco, he arrived in the Bay Area in time for the show but was hospitalized and died without being able to attend.



Rahul died at the young age of 60 and leaves behind a legacy of positive energy shared by all of those whose lives he touched, healed, taught and influenced.

Lila Seychellyse, who was a student of Rahul's remarked, "Rahul Patel's life was a work of art... He once told me, 'Life is not a compromise, life is a romance with adventure!' He was a master at transforming the mundane into the extraordinary and his teachings will forever be alive within me. His voice will be a constant reminder, pushing me beyond my limitations, giving me the courage and strength to conquer my fears, chase my dreams and live what he so eloquently called, 'The Fairy-tale'."

We bid you farewell brother Rahul and your memory we shall cherish for years to come. May God be kind and give Peace to your Soul.



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