

Wisdom of the Mountain: Art of the Ömie

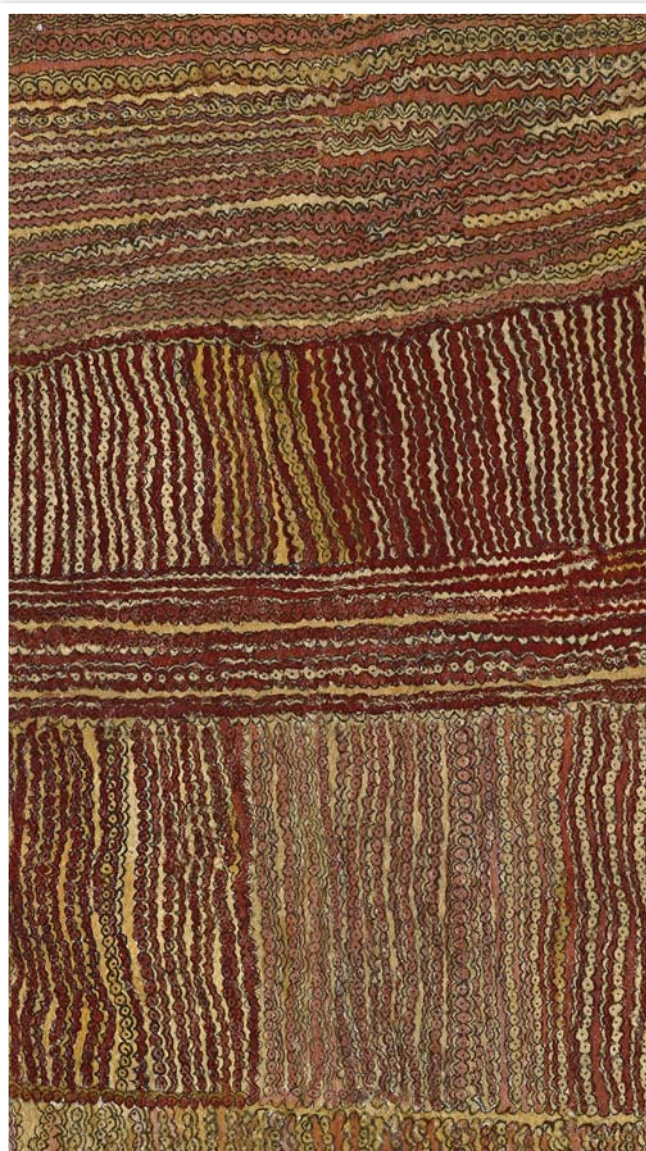
National Gallery of Victoria International,
St Kilda Road

27 November 2009 – 21 March 2010

The Ömie, a small tribe of less than 2000 people, lives on the steep south-eastern slopes of Mount Lamington in Papua New Guinea.

This exhibition, of around thirty of the finest examples of Ömie bark cloth, reveals the beauty and spiritual inwardness of designs for Spider Web, Bark of the Trees, Jungle Vine and Mountains, custom creations dyed onto the cloth with fluid complexity.

The designs, echoing body tattoos, affirm the artists' identity and intimate affinity with place and assert the power of different clans. The exhibition will show the dynamism of a great art form expressive of a vital living culture, enabling the viewer to study the work of eight strongly individual Ömie women artists, defying commonly held misconceptions that the artist in Oceanic society is anonymous and male. www.ngv.vic.gov.au



Above: Flora Oviro

Ömie people, Dahoruraje clan, born 1973
Soru'e (Tattoo design) 2005
Savodobei village, Oro Province, Papua New Guinea
natural pigments on *nioge* (barkcloth) 132.7 x 66.0 cm irreg.
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Gift of David Baker, 2007
© The artists, courtesy Ömie Nemiss Incorporated

At left: Dapeni Jonevari

Ömie people, Emate clan, born 1949
Butötudë ohu'o odunaige
(*Spider web and climbing vine with thorns and tendrils*) 2006
Godibehi village, Oro Province, Papua New Guinea
natural pigments on *nioge* (barkcloth) 141.5 x 95.3 cm irreg.
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Gift of David Baker, 2007
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