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Peoples of the Pacific

Stock#: 67860bm
Map Maker: Schwabacher-Frey Co. / Crocker
Co. / Covarrubias
Date: 1940
Place: San Francisco
Color: Color
Condition: VG
Size: 34 x 21.5 inches
Price: \$ 345.00



Description:

An attractive lithograph from 1940 showing the peoples of the Pacific, after the eponymous mural by the talented Mexican intellectual Miguel Covarrubias. The map shows the Pacific in its entirety and extends to all of the Americas, Oceania, and most of southeastern and eastern Asia. The focus of the work is the dozens of portraits of the inhabitants of each region depicted on the map, including the aboriginal peoples in the Pacific and the Americas, white settlers, and the dominant ethnicities in eastern Asia. A legend shows the supposed dominant racial distribution across the map.

The work is intriguing in many respects. First of all, the variety of depictions is extensive and surprisingly detailed, and the variety of native dresses is evidently well researched. Many different ethnicities are represented, with a surprising density and variation. For example, Sri Lanka has two different depictions, with the Vedda and the Singhalese peoples both represented. Many of the major Indonesian islands and archipelagos each have their own representation, with people from Timor, Bali, Mentawai, and Nias all shown. Not only are native populations depicted, but an eastern businessman, Canadian lumberjack, Patagonian Gaucho, and Hollywood star are all also shown in the Americas.

Perhaps most intriguing in the map is the legend, which breaks the population down into three main groupings: Mongoloids, Caucasoids, and Negroids. In the map, these are shown to the exclusion of one another. While this might work in some regions, this methodology breaks down in ethnically diverse areas such as Sri Lanka, Australia (divided exclusively into "White Australian" and "Aboriginal Australian"), and, of course, the Americas. This area is a swirl of many different colors. Ethnically diverse parts of South America are shown dotted, while "American Indian Mongoloids" only inhabit the most remote regions. Most of the United States is Caucasoid, save for Indian reservations and the deep south.

This printing was based on a mural of the same name featured at the 1939 San Francisco Golden Gate



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International Exposition. Covarrubias was commissioned to create a series of murals, named the "Pageant of the Pacific," which would be featured in the Pacific House on Treasure Island. Covarrubias and his assistant Antonio Ruiz created six maps for this commission, with subjects regarding the peoples, flora and fauna, art, and more, all focused on the greater Pacific region. The works which were produced were a prime example of the importance of Mexican muralists in the United States, and was a major attraction at the exposition.

Miguel Covarrubias was a renowned Mexican intellectual and artist, interested in the politics of the modern world but also fascinated by pre-Columbian American cultures. This historical interest often seeped into his artistic style, and many of his works were evidently influenced by art from traditional American cultures. This is evident in his present work, which would also have been informed by his extensive travels throughout Southeast Asia. These voyages were funded by several high profile prizes, including a Guggenheim Fellowship.

Covarrubias was perhaps most popular among a general audience for his caricatures, and his work appeared repeatedly in *The New Yorker* and *Vanity Fair*. His caricatural style can be seen in certain aspects of the present work.

Detailed Condition: