

VI. Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity

There is only one item on the Representative List of the ICH of Humanity for the Vanuatu, it's the sand drawing.

Description of the culture expression through out the northern and central islands of Vanuatu, a range of different communities engage in a practice which has come to be known as "sand drawing". This unique tradition involves drawing geometric figures directly onto ground with one or two fingers. Vanuatu sand drawings are quite distinct from other forms of ground-based art (such as sand sculptures of Australian Aboriginals, or sand painting of Navajo Indians), because they are executed as cursive or continuous lines. Each design is considered as typed of maze, and the line of the drawing is type as a largely uninterrupted path, often without lifting the finger from the ground.

To give credit to the intellectual sophistication of this unique practice, it is perhaps more accurate to describe sand drawing as an indigenous form of 'writing', rather than 'drawing'. In fact, the indigenous words for sand drawing (uli, naites, nitus, ghir, rolu, nana, ulan, etc). In this respect, it is important to note that sand drawing is employed to leave messages, explain concepts, and recount stories. In addition to these aspects of literary and oral significance, however, sand drawing is clearly an 'artistic' practice, which demonstrates remarkable skill in its composition of visual form and movement. Sand drawing express creative relationships between artists and their habitats. This involves giving imaginative visual form to sensations of sound, movement, tactility, colour and smell.

The sand drawing practice includes up to 99 different language groups. Sand drawing is traditionally practised throughout the central and northern area of the Vanuatu archipelago, which includes the islands of Epi, Paama, Ambrym, Malakula, Pentecost, Ambae, Maewo, Santo, and the Banks Islands.

Even though these historical circumstances have changed during the processes of colonization and post-colonial national 'development', sand drawing continues to function as a form of both cultural exchange and cultural distinction. Different communities within the central islands still practice particular styles of sand drawing in association with the stories and songs that are locally specific. In fact, these designs are important mnemonic devices for recalling oral information about local histories, indigenous cosmologies, kinship systems, scientific

knowledge, and choreographic patterns, which have been threatened by modern education.

Vanuatu sand drawing has clearly originated in a specific geographical area, in relation to deeply rooted traditions and distinctive socio-cultural complexes. This is testified to by the following factors:

- Origin myths attribute the invention of sand drawing to mythical gods;
- In order to pass on to the afterlife, it is often essential to know specific sand drawings.
- Ancient kinship systems are allegorically represented in sand drawings.
- Legends involve episodes in which protagonists use sand drawings to communicate or summon spirits.
- Sand drawings are used to recount a wide range of cultural practices and traditional histories which are peculiar to the region.
- Sand drawing occur nowhere else in the surrounding Pacific Ocean region.

The names listed below are only those who have been consulted in the course of preparing the candidature file. There are also many more individuals who are sand drawing practitioners.

- **Pentecost**
Simon Godin, Peter Hubad, Dominique Molbwet, Paul Aru, Jean Louis, Mrs Laurent
- **Maewo**
Baldwin Garae, Jeffry UliBoe
- **Ambae**
ThorswellVira, Gerome Natagaro, Edward Garaelolo, Roslyn Garae
- **Malakula**
Peter Walit, Claude Herromaly, TavubelAiser, Peter Fidelio, HonorineSmythe, George Loren, StephaneLelektei, MeltegAti, BaniMeltegRunge, HilteverBani, Munis Young, Longlel Tom, Tom Aimangil, Jerry Massing, Limbel Nobel, Ian John.
- **Ambrym**
John Melcon, Bong MialOpet, John Tasso, Hosea Miel, Michel Burcot, MarcingFanu, Gaston Batik, IreniBangdor.
- **Paama**
Jacques Gideon, Morris Andre, Manson Morrison, Paul James, Oris Robert, Jacques Taritong, Willy TugonVuleh, Marsen Harry.