



New Guinea Ceremonies

David Gillison

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When David Gillison first arrived in New Guinea in 1973, ceremonies marking birth, death, initiation, and marriage were still being conducted by the Gimi tribe as they had been for thousands of years. Today, many of the Gimi's indigenous traditions, like those depicted in Abrams' acclaimed *African Ceremonies*, are disappearing forever.

Gillison's brilliant photographs and intimate text capture the remarkable dramas enacted during what was probably the last-ever Hau, a two-week fertility festival. Ranging from creation myths to scenarios of affairs, clan jealousies, and family strife, these playlets, ultimately forbidden by Westerners, are no longer performed. Gillison movingly preserves them here for history. The only photographic record we have of the Gimi and their unique theater rituals, the book also depicts the major effort to save the spectacular rainforest home of the Gimi, which stands as a world model for indigenous conservation.

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