



Māori Woman

Date

1881

Primary Maker

Māori

Medium

Photographic print

Description

This is a photograph of a Māori woman in New Zealand. The carte-de-visite was a printing format which used a multi-lensed camera with removable slides to take up to eight exposures in a short amount of time. The popularity of this custom helped spur the development of the career photographer and the portrait studio. By 1859, millions of portraits were being produced. The small size and high volume of cartes-de-visite meant that they could be purchased not only of the aristocracy but, by artists, celebrities, and the working class as well. Over time the subject matter extended to include monuments, artworks,

and noteworthy people, meaning that the cards became highly collectable. Between 1860 and the turn of the century the interest in images of indigenous people fueled photographers' travel to Latin America, Australia, and many of the islands in the Southern Pacific. Photographs were made in several styles. Many of the cartes-de-visite depicting people outside of Europe supposedly emphasized the negative physiognomic traits of non-Western individuals. Many of these photographs represent the most objective depictions of indigenous cultures from around the world and—in rarer cases still—offer insights into now-lost cultural customs.

Dimensions

4 1/8 × 2 1/2 in. (10.5 × 6.4 cm)