The theme of this issue is creations and the processes of imagination and innovation that produce, modify, and manifest culture. People innovate by imaginatively reassessing, recombining, and adopting elements of earlier discoveries and inventions. Throughout humanity's past, creativity has enacted and changed traditions in conservative, diversifying and progressive directions. Ethnographic research in Polynesia, Melanesia and Australia is presented here, documenting how people create consciously and subconsciously. The contributors show that creativity thrives and often depends on associations linking or equating ideal, performative, and material culture. Some of the creations considered are effigy carvings, dances, totemic objects, headhunting, mementos, skits, and dreams. Many cultural theories of creations downplay individual authorship by interpreting novelties as discoveries or communications from others, whilst others emphasise the productivity of individual minds and the uniqueness of their creations. Decisions about intellectual property rights vary depending on which cultural theory of creations is in place.

Content of this Special Issue includes:

Introduction: The Anthropology of Creations
Roger Ivar Lohmann

Imagination behind Shape: The Invisible Content of Asmat Artefacts
Astrid De Hontheim

On Dreams, Innovation, and the Emerging Genre of the Individual Artist
Katie Glaskin

Race, Gender, and 'Foreign Exchange' In Samoan Performing Arts
Jeannette Mageo

In The Company of Things Left Behind: Asabano Mementos
Roger Ivar Lohmann

On Imagination and Creation: An Afterword
Joel Robbins