



# Arrow head

---

## Not on display

**Title/Description:** Arrow head

**Born:** 1800 - 1950

**Object Type:** Implement

**Materials:** Bone, Fibre, Pigment, Wood

**Measurements:** h. 685 x w. 28 x d. 28 mm

**Accession Number:** 154

**Historic Period:** 19th century, 20th Century - Early

**Production Place:** Daudai, New Guinea, Oceania, Pacific, South Coast

**Credit Line:** Donated by Robert and Lisa Sainsbury, 1973

---

An arrow is a symbolic object in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea. Different arrows are created for specific purposes and did not have one singular use. The figurative design carved on this arrow indicates that there is a story or meaning behind it. The way this arrow is created with sharp edges suggests it is meant to be dangerous. The fibre that is tied around the top end of the arrow also has a narrative. If someone is shot with this type of arrow, the fibre would most likely hold poison and could cause death.

The paints that are used on the arrow are representative of paints from the region. Sometimes such arrows are made and presented to the chief in the village or the community, which symbolises that the chief must take lead of the village. Whatever situation it may be, the chief must stand firm and lead the people especially in times of trouble and fighting.

Pax Jakupa, February 2023

TO-BE-REPLACED-WITH-A-GAP

Although generally attributed to the Torres Straits, these arrows were made on the adjacent New Guinea mainland and were acquired by the Torres Straits islanders through inter-community exchanges (Haddon, 1912: 175). A note on this example by Douglas Fraser states that they were made in the Daudai area and were traded to the islands via Mowatta.

The arrow head itself represents a stylised male figure — the head is prominent, the body condensed and the legs elongated. All details are highlighted by lime, which fills the carved recesses. When complete with cane shaft the arrow was over six feet long.

Steven Hooper, 1997

Entry taken from *Robert and Lisa Sainsbury Collection, Vol. 2: Pacific, African and Native North American Art*, edited by Steven Hooper (Yale University Press, 1997) p. 59.

---

---

---

## **Provenance**

Acquired by the Sainsbury Family in 1957. Donated to the Sainsbury Centre, University of East Anglia in 1973 as part of the original gift.

---