



# Helmet mask

---

**Not on display**

**Title/Description:** Helmet mask

**Born:** 1900 - 1999

**Object Type:** Mask

**Materials:** Bark cloth, Cane, Fibre, Pigment

**Measurements:** h. 1190 x w. 500 x d.370 mm

**Accession Number:** 175

**Historic Period:** 20th century

**Production Place:** Central Baining, New Britain, Oceania, Pacific

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

---

The Baining of the Gazelle Peninsula are famous for their large and dramatic masks, worn during day and night dancing ceremonies (see Rubin, 1984: I: 116, for a colossal example from the north-West Baining, which is over twenty-three feet high).

This example comes from the central Baining and is a type of helmet mask called km/at, which are distinguished by large eyes and a tongue-like projection at the mouth. These were worn for night dances, and Corbin (1979) states that the designs refer to a variety of natural and manufactured forms. They are painted in black and red, and the back of the upper disc has a lateral band of zig-zag designs in the same colours.

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. 66.

---

---

---

## **Provenance**

Acquired by the Sainsbury Family in 1970. Donated to the Sainsbury Centre, University of East Anglia in 1973 as part of the original gift.

---