



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.
