



Heddle pulley holder (for weaving)

On display

Title/Description: Heddle pulley holder (for weaving)

Born: 1900 - 1999

Materials: Wood

Measurements: h. 162 x w. 57 x d. 60 mm

Accession Number: 201

Historic Period: 20th century

Credit Line: Donated by Robert and Lisa Sainsbury, 1973

The Ligbi people are culturally typical of a number of communities which are clustered to the east of Bonduku, in the eastern Ivory Coast, and extend across the Ghana border near Wenchi. These groups, sandwiched between the Senufo (or Siena) and Baule areas, show unmistakable evidence in their art of strong influence from the Senufo, notably in their masks and in the minor arts, such as the carving of ornamental pulley holders. These support a pair of heddle rods which allow the rapid shed-changing that is such a feature of West African double-heddle narrow-loom weaving (see Lamb, 1975: 50-53 for weaving details).

In the Ivory Coast area, heddle pulley holders are surmounted by animal or human heads by which they are suspended from the loom framework; the heads are apparently ornamental rather than ritual. In this case an antelope's head is represented; like many such, the portrayal has anthropomorphic elements. The strength of the triangular full-face aspect and vertical profile, combined with the backward slope of the chin and arch of the neck which create a triangular space intended to accommodate the suspension cord, show the carver's mastery of both function and aesthetic.

Margaret Carey, 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. 127.

Provenance

Purchased by Robert and Lisa Sainsbury from K. J. Hewett in 1962.

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