



Handle in form of horse and rider

Not on display

Title/Description: Handle in form of horse and rider

Born: 1600 - 1900


Measurements: h. 98 x w. 45 x d. 25 mm

Accession Number: 212

Historic Period: 17th century, 20th century

Credit Line: Donated by Robert and Lisa Sainsbury, 1973

This figure, which may have surmounted a chief's cane or formed the handle of a fly-whisk, shows a delightful indifference to equine physiology in the horse's portrayal with a humanoid face (echoing that of the rider), cloven hooves and a body grooved all over in a manner reminiscent of the strange Sherbro-style ivory beast in the British Museum (Fagg, 1959: pls. 30-32).

Since the West African carver, when they wished, could produce an adequately realistic representation of a horse (see UEA 231), it is tempting to speculate that the artist was either carving a horse from hearsay, or intending to portray some other animal associated with chiefship and its attributes. The peaked cap suggests that the rider could be a European or a chief wearing a cap. Visonå (1987: 63, fig. 7) illustrates a staff finial with comparable figures.

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. 135.

Provenance

Formerly in the collection of Roger Bediat.

Purchased by Robert and Lisa Sainsbury from Mathias Komor in 1966.

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