



Comb

Not on display

Title/Description: Comb

Born: 1800 - 1999

Object Type: Comb

Materials: Elephant ivory

Measurements: h. 195 x w. 75 x d. 23 mm


Accession Number: 219

Historic Period: 19th century, 20th century

Production Place: Africa, Côte d'Ivoire

Cultural Group: Atye

Credit Line: Donated by Robert and Lisa Sainsbury, 1973

Combs of this type were worn by Atye women on special occasions such as celebrations for her first child, or during marriage festivities; such ornaments  enhance her beauty, and also affirm her status as a productive member of a family and lineage.

There is a possibility that this comb is not authentic; similar examples, such as that in Lisbon (de Oliveira, 1968: pl. 117), with no documentation before 1962, do not assist authentication. It is nevertheless of some interest, and is said to have been excavated at Kongoti village near M'Bayakto (Mbahiakro?). Philip Ravenhill writes (personal communication) that genuine pieces in this style exist; copies are usually patinated by permanganate, which gives the ivory a rich brownish tint (here the ivory is pale).

Margaret Carey, 1997

Hooper, Steven (ed.) *Robert and Lisa Sainsbury Collection, Vol. 2: Pacific, African and Native North American art*. New Haven; London: Yale University Press in association with University of East Anglia, 1997, cat no. 92, p. 134.

Provenance

Note in the Sainsbury Centre archives suggesting the comb was excavated at Kongoti Village, near M'Bayakto.

Formerly belonging to Mariange Ciolkowski, Paris.

Purchased by Robert and Lisa Sainsbury from K. J. Hewett in 1960.

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