



Miniature figure of a drummer

On display

Title/Description: Miniature figure of a drummer

Born: 1850 - 1950

Object Type: Figure

Materials: Wood

Measurements: h. 133 x w. 68 x d. 42 mm

Accession Number: 242


Historic Period: 19th Century - Late, 20th Century - Early

Production Place: Africa, Gabon

Cultural Group: Lumbo, Shira-Punu

Credit Line: Donated by Robert and Lisa Sainsbury, 1973

Perrois (1979: pls. 277, 277a, 279) attributes several miniature carvings like this to the Lumbo, one of the Shira-Punu group of peoples in southern Gabon, around the Nyanga river valley. The backward projecting coiffure is characteristic of this style and has led to some of these carvings, including this one, being described as hooks.

This figure has a pith channel running all the way from the top of its head,  through the body, and across the ring. This would severely weaken the ring, and when other pieces in the style, some with flat bases, are considered, the hook hypothesis seems unconvincing. It is possibly an amulet or charm which could be worn as a pendant, whether carried in the hand or on a finger, or even hung on a wall. The figure is apparently male, and the position astride the drum is one commonly adopted when playing the long cylindrical drums found in this part of Africa.

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. 173.

Provenance

Purchased by Robert and Lisa Sainsbury from S. Rasmussen in 1965.

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