



Mask

Not on display

Title/Description: Mask

Born: 1900 c. - 1999 c.

Object Type: Mask

Materials: Pigment, Wood

Measurements: h. 273 x w. 168 x d. 125 mm

Accession Number: 528

Historic Period: 20th century

Production Place: Africa, Democratic Republic of Congo

Cultural Group: Vili, Yombe

Masks of this type come from around the lower Zaire river and are generally attributed to the northern Yombe or the Vili. The mitre-like cap and chipped teeth point to a Yombe origin: yet masks with faces painted in polychrome designs do appear to have Vili connections. There has been so much culture change in this area that very little can be said with certainty about the culture context of these masks. Maesen (n.d.: pl. 6) records a suggestion that they may have been associated with divinatory rituals. Since modern Yombe have forgotten even the generic name of the painted-face masks, one can only guess that a whiteface mask might relate to ancestor worship.

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. 177.

Provenance

Purchased by Robert and Lisa Sainsbury from Mathias Komor, New York in 1973.

Accessioned into the Sainsbury Centre, University of East Anglia circa 2000.
