



Mother and child group

Not on display

Title/Description: Mother and child group

Born: 1900 c. - 1999 c.

Object Type: Figure

Materials: Wood

Measurements: h. 317 x w. 102 x d. 58 mm

Accession Number: 534

Historic Period: 20th century

Production Place: Africa, Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo

Cultural Group: Yaka

The mother and child theme in art occurs widely across Africa, evidence of the importance of the principle of increase. In many cases the child is portrayed on the mother's back, the usual place for carrying a baby. Around the mouth of Zaire, mother and child groups (*phemba*) often show the child on the mother's lap, sometimes dead, sometimes being suckled. It is unusual to see a child depicted in its mother's arms and straddling one hip, as here; yet there is another figure in the Lisbon Ethnological Museum attributed to the Yaka showing a similar group, although by a different hand (de Oliveira, 1968: pl. 176). Somewhere on the Zaire/Angola border seems a likely place of origin. The retrousse noses and columnar necks are characteristic.

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. 188.

Provenance

Purchased by Robert and Lisa Sainsbury from K. J. Hewett in 1973.

Accessioned into the Sainsbury Centre, University of East Anglia circa 1990.
