

# Basic Detail Report

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## Horn

### Date

early to mid 20th Century

### Medium

Wood and plant fiber

### Description

This wooden horn comes from the Blackwater River region, a tributary of Papua New Guinea's Sepik River. Horns are objects of paramount importance among the latmul and other Sepik cultures. They were blown to commemorate a successful war party, and perhaps similar occasions, but they were also used for the traditional function of horns: to create music. Only one tone can be created by blowing into the hole on this horn. As such, signals were sent in the form of different rhythmic codes. These codes included various long and short notes that were grouped together in various different ways. Used in pairs, trumpets with varying apertures produced different

notes, and talented performers could use these instruments to great effect, creating such a harmonious sound that it reminded an early German ethnographer of Wagner's Tristan and Isolde. Horns could be highly ornate, decorated with geometric, zoomorphic, and anthropomorphic figures.

### Dimensions

31 1/8 × 3 1/2 × 3 3/8 in. (79.1 × 8.9 × 8.6 cm)