



Ancestor Figure (Maira)

Date

early to mid 20th Century

Primary Maker

Wosera Abelam

Medium

Wood and pigment

Description

This totemic wooden sculpture from the Abelam culture of Papua New Guinea represents a NgwallIndu, a supernatural spirit-being associated with clan ancestors, and would have been found inside an Abelam Spirit House (Haus Tambaran). These figures, some ten to fifteen feet high, are ritually painted and repainted for ceremonies and displayed to young men being initiated into adulthood. The refurbishing is thought to ensure the ancestor's continuing cooperation in the affairs of the community.

Dimensions

118 in. (299.7 cm)