



Oil Dish (Sedre Ni Waiwai)

Date

early to mid 19th Century

Medium

Wood

Description

Fijian oil dishes, sedre ni waiwai in the vernacular, were used to hold scented coconut oil intended for use only within sacred sites by Fijian priests during important

occasions. During these rituals, the subject would be anointed in oil from this bowl, which has left a dark, rich patina. Though the bowl itself was almost exclusively made in the leaf-shape we see here, the handles took a wide variety of openwork forms. Many of the handles are geometric in design, which is again something we see with this sedre ni waiwai. One of the key factors in the design of the handle though, was its functionality. It had to be sturdy enough to be suspended when not in use. Whether these designs also indicate where the dish originated from or the artistic preference of the carver is unclear.

Dimensions

16 3/4 x 10 1/2 x 2 1/4 in. (42.5 x 26.7 x 5.7 cm)