



Orator's Stool (Teket)

Date

20th Century

Primary Maker

Iatmul

Medium

Wood

Description

This Orator's Stool, the vernacular name for which is teket, comes from the Iatmul people residing in the Middle Sepik River region of Papua New Guinea. Ceremonial chairs such as this one are a common fixture of an Iatmul Men's House. Despite its name, it is not meant to be sat upon, but it is used to facilitate discussion during village meetings and debates. During a discussion, the speaker stands next to the orator's stool and hits the top of the stool with a cluster of leaves, sticks, and grass to emphasize important points in his argument. He also

places leaves on the stool to confirm his statements. When the first speaker is finished and all the leaves lay on the stool, the next speaker can begin his address. After all of the speakers have stated their arguments, the village chief hits the stool a few more times and states a decision for all to follow. Orator's stools come in a variety of sizes, and this one in particular is large enough to sit in.

Dimensions

36 3/8 × 18 1/8 × 19 1/2 in. (92.4 × 46 × 49.5 cm)