



Spirit Figure

Date

late 20th Century

Primary Maker

Kwoma

Medium

Wood, pigment and cowrie shell

Description

This is a polychrome, totemic sculpture of a bird, amorphic figure and mask from Papua New Guinea's Sepik River. Based on the lack similar examples in museum collections and the evidently recent pigmentation, this is likely a relatively contemporary sculpture, a factor which makes identification difficult. The pigmentation pattern and creation of semi-similar totemic figures may indicate that this was made by the Kwoma

culture of the Washkuk mountains, though it does also bear some thematic similarities to the haus tambaran gable finials of the latmul. It should be noted that most Sepik peoples are descended from one common root. Due to this commonality and trade along the river, there is a good deal of artistic similarity spanning the length of the Sepik.

Dimensions

55 in. (139.7 cm)