



Orator's Stool (Teket)

Date

early 20th Century

Primary Maker

latmul

Medium

Wood, ochre, shell, hair and plant fiber

Description

This Orator's Stool, the vernacular name for which is teket, comes from the latmul people residing in the Middle Sepik River region of Papua New Guinea. It was collected in 1955. Ceremonial chairs such as this one are a common fixture of an latmul 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.

Dimensions

34 in. (86.4 cm)