



Nose Ornament (Bipane)

Date
mid 20th Century

Primary Maker
Asmat

Medium
Cymbium shell and fiber

Description

Nose ornament collected from the Asmat people in the Papua Province (Irian Jaya) of Indonesia. The object dates back to the mid-20th century. This ornament consists of two shells curved in towards each other bound together by fiber strings through perforated holes in shells. The Asmat are well known for their elaborate body ornamentation and the bipane is one of the most typical forms of adornment among males in the tribe. The bipane is meticulously carved out of shell with each curved end representing the tusk of a boar or tail of a cuscus. The adornment of the bipane symbolically represents a well and successful hunt. The piece is worn through a hole pierced through the nasal septum and hangs down around the mouth, simulating the look of tusks. This accessory appears often in other carved art forms by the Asmat as a shorthand reference to the men who wear it.

Dimensions
2 1/16 × 4 1/4 × 1/4 in. (5.2 × 10.8 × 0.6 cm)