



Nose Ornament (Otsj)

Date
mid 20th Century

Primary Maker
Asmat

Medium
Wood

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. Hollow carved cylinder shape with two prong pointed ends. There are eight slits carved onto both sides. The Asmat are well known for their elaborate body ornamentation and the otsj is the most prestigious adornment among males in the tribe. These pieces are often carved from wood, animal bone, and in special circumstance human bone. Otsj are carved into the shape of a praying mantis as it is considered an important head-hunting symbol among the Asmat. The piece is worn through a hole pierced through the nasal septum. This accessory appears often in other carved art forms by the Asmat as a shorthand reference to the men who wear it. This piece is most likely a combination of two Otsj stung together as an elaborate display.

Dimensions
1 3/8 × 5 1/4 × 3/4 in. (3.5 × 13.3 × 1.9 cm)