



## Dance Mask (Kavat)

### Date

20th Century

### Primary Maker

Baining

### Medium

Bark cloth, bamboo cane, paint, raffia and feather

### Description

This fire dance helmet mask comes from the Baining people residing on the Gazelle Peninsula in Papua New Guinea's East New Britain Province. Although the mask looks cumbersome, it is in fact very lightweight. Constructed from cane reeds, bark cloth, and other materials that disintegrate very easily, the masks of the fire dance are constructed over months and danced only for a few minutes before they are, in most cases, left to decompose in the forest. Baining masks represent forest leaves and animals both real and imaginary. Many are

made for the noted fire dance mask during which dancers walk through fire, kicking up sparks of burning embers.

### Dimensions

57 × 31 × 27 in. (144.8 × 78.7 × 68.6 cm)