



Dance Adze

Date

1930-1939

Primary Maker

Yangoru Boiken

Medium

Wood

Description

Generally composed of a wood haft and a stone or, more recently, metal head, adzes have been used to work wood and till soil since prehistoric times. It might strike some as strange then that this piece is made entirely of wood and that it does not have even a blade. Among the Yangoru Boiken of Papua New Guinea, adzes are used as prestige objects which would be slung over the shoulders of important men during ceremonies or public speeches. Examples tipped with one bird and one blade rather than the two opposing birds seen here show how this object

might have transitioned from a partially utilitarian to a purely ornamental object. Among the Boiken, different birds are used as totems by various clans.

Dimensions

32 3/4 × 10 3/8 × 3 3/8 in. (83.2 × 26.4 × 8.6 cm)