



Headdress Mask (Sisiu)

Date

20th Century

Primary Maker

Sulka

Medium

Wood, fiber, Tonga leaves and natural pigment

Description

This object is a dance mask in male form from the Sulka people residing in East New Britain Province, Papua New Guinea. The sisiu mask was traditionally worn as a part of a larger secret society masked ritual where a variety of other ancestral masks made an appearance. The East New Britain region of New Guinea is laden with numerous men's secret societies that help connect men to their ancestors through elaborate dance rituals that only the men are allowed to witness. The masks often take months to create and are destroyed after the ritualized dance.

Today many of these dances are now seen by the entire village after the influence of the missionaries and tourism.

Dimensions

31 1/2 × 31 × 23 1/2 in. (80 × 78.7 × 59.7 cm)