



Amulet (Hei Tiki)

Date

18th Century

Primary Maker

Māori

Medium

Nephrite and sealing wax

Description

This is an 18th century amulet called a Hei Tiki from the Māori culture of New Zealand. Several theories exist as to the significance of this amulet including its function to increase fertility, and the possibility it represents a human infant being birthed. Made of a type of jade called nephrite the figure (tiki) was worn suspended around the neck (hei). These amulets were worn by both men and women and it was believed, as is the case with all Māori art that the spiritual value of the amulet increased with successive ownerships. The eyes of hei tiki were typically

inlaid with shell; the red sealing wax that defines this tiki's eyes was received through exchange with early foreigners to the island.

Dimensions

3 × 2 × 1/2 in. (7.6 × 5.1 × 1.3 cm)