



Ancestor Board (Gope)

Date

20th Century

Medium

Wood and pigment

Description

This ancestor board, the vernacular name for which is Gope, comes from the Gulf of Papua in the Gulf Province of Papua New Guinea and it dates to the 20th century. The figures carved on gope boards are imbued with secret knowledge revealed only to the initiated. Kept in the Spirit House, the boards are placed among other carvings and the skulls of ancestors. Serving as temporary vessels for the ancestors to occupy, they also bring fortune to those who carry out headhunting raids.

Dimensions

33 5/8 × 5 1/2 × 1/4 in. (85.4 × 14 × 0.6 cm)