

# Basic Detail Report

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## Slit Gong (Garamut)

### Date

mid 20th Century

### Medium

Wood and pigments

### Description

A Slit Gong Drum (Garamut) collected from the Govermas village near the Blackwater River in the East Sepik

Province of Papua New Guinea. Because it is carved from a single log of the hardwood known as the garamut; it is extremely heavy and would have been used only in the men's house. Smaller, more common slit gongs are portable and taken to dances and other ceremonies. Garamuts are kept in ceremonial houses and only men are allowed to play them. They are used for music during ceremonies, especially initiation ceremonies, and for signaling. The deep resonating voice of the slit gong carries for miles along the river and surrounding area. Garamuts are considered to have a spirit and they have names. They are powerful like masks and figures. They are thought to be so powerful that they can kill people or make them sick. A garamut is said to have the capability of taking on other forms and walk at night. According to James Leach in his article in the Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute (Dec. 2002) entitled "Drum, and Voice: Aesthetics and Social Process on the Rai Coast of Papua New Guinea" the garamuts are denoted as a man, and is the focus of a process which brings forth a form of social relations.

### Dimensions

19 × 15 × 71 in. (48.3 × 38.1 × 180.3 cm)