

Basic Detail Report



Shield

Date

early 20th Century

Primary Maker

Lumi

Medium

Wood and rattan

Description

The curving form of this stone-carved shield allows archers to fire around it while it is slung over their shoulder for protection. Shields from the Torricelli Mountains are characterized by their lack of pigmentation and the spiraling, curvilinear motif seen here; they are intentionally less conspicuous than the brightly colored shields used by other Papuan cultures. Papuan shields were designed to protect warriors both physically and spiritually from the chaos of battle. Their bulky forms could easily deflect projectiles like arrows and spears, as

well as block attacks from clubs. Carefully carved sculptural elements and painted designs helped warriors to magically draw strength and protection from their ancestors, the spirits of animals, and the land itself. When wars were declared, men often repainted their shields with dazzlingly vibrant colors to distract and threaten their enemies. Their designs signaled the status of the carrier, his prowess as a warrior, and his connection to the spiritual world.

Dimensions

28 × 44 × 2 1/2 in. (71.1 × 111.8 × 6.4 cm)