



Chest Ornament (Tema)

Date

mid to late 1800s

Medium

Clam shell, turtle shell and fiber

Description

Tema were large chest ornaments of clam shell worn by male dancers on the islands of Santa Cruz. Tema were worn by important men in ceremonies and during battle. The turtle shell overlay typically has stylized frigate birds, bonito fish and sharks as elements of its design: it combines them into what is said to be a stylized ancestor figure.

Dimensions

6 1/2 × 6 3/8 × 7/16 in. (16.6 × 16.2 × 1.1 cm)