



Splashboard (Lagim)

Date

20th Century

Primary Maker

Massim

Medium

Wood and paint

Description

Splashboards are an important part of the canoes used for kula trade voyages. Each canoe has two splashboards, one of the bow and one on the stern, that holds up the sideboards, increases the depth of the hull and keeps the ocean water from splashing the people traveling in the canoe. There are not many known examples of snake designs such as those seen here. Those that can be found

are from Yanaba Island, the Louisade Archipelago, Gawa and Kwaiwata. When snakes are employed, it has been said that they only appear in the upper right section of the splashboard. This design obviously does not align with this information. Animal designs on splashboards are thought of as tools to interpret its overall meaning. The animal's color and form have a deeper interconnected meaning. Snakes also hold a special place in a carver's initiation rites and symbolically stand for designs slipping into the mind of the carver, into his body and onto the carving itself.

Dimensions

33 × 18 × 2 1/4 in. (83.8 × 45.7 × 5.7 cm)