

Basic Detail Report

Wave Splitter Finial (Munkuris)

Date

20th Century

Primary Maker

Massim

Medium

Wood

Description

Wave splitter finials are a part of the elaborate ngega kula canoes used in the kula trade ring in the Massim area of Papua New Guinea. Known colloquially as munkuris, the finials are tied atop a wave splitter, also known as prowboard or tabuya, which is located on both the prow and the stern of the canoe. Birds are commonly carved at each side of the final. The birds represent magic that protects the canoe and its passengers from various difficulties during their voyage. These finials have also been metaphorically described as head or hair that is attached to the vertical “neck” of prowboards. The prowboards have been referred to as the chest and/or shoulders of the canoe.

Dimensions

23 1/4 × 13 3/4 × 3 in. (59.1 × 34.9 × 7.6 cm)