



Axe Haft Currency

Date

20th Century

Primary Maker

Massim

Medium

Wood, fiber and paint

Description

The purpose of such axe hafts is not a functional one. Rather, together with stone blades, these axes are a prestige item and a form of currency within the Massim area. The overall purpose of the haft of the axe is to display and set off the striking qualities of the blade, which is where the axe’s value lies. The bottom finial of presentation axes very often features a frigate bird design. It is possible that the carving seen here is a stylized representation of an upside down bird. There are currently mixed reports about whether or not these axes

are still actively being used as currency. Regardless, it is clear that presentation axes continue to hold an esteemed place in Massim society.

Dimensions

32 × 13 1/2 × 3/4 in. (81.3 × 34.3 × 1.9 cm)