



Shield

Date

20th Century

Primary Maker

Iatmul

Medium

Wood

Description

The designs that adorn shields from Papua New Guinea represent important objects connected to a warrior's ancestors, features from the landscape, and from the bird, animal and human worlds. A shield's design declared the status of the carrier, his strength as a warrior, and his connection to the spiritual world. When warfare was expected, men would repaint their shields hoping that the colors shone brightly to dazzle and threaten their enemy. Once in close range to the enemy during battle the shield protected him physically from attack from slingshots,

spears, arrows and clubs. In addition the shield symbolically protected him from harm by the power of his connection to his ancestors. This shield does not appear to have any traces of paint. This may suggest that this piece was created recently, was never used in a battle situation, or that it was made for purchase.

Dimensions

75 × 11 × 3 in. (190.5 × 27.9 × 7.6 cm)