



## Lime Spatula

### Date

early 20th Century

### Primary Maker

Massim

### Medium

Wood

### Description

The combination of lime powder and chopped betel nut produces a mild narcotic that is ritually and habitually used throughout the Pacific. Lime spatulas are used to convey the combination from a container to an individual's mouth. Spatulas are also considered objects of beauty and, in some cases, prestige. Many spatulas feature

handles with human figures; however this example is quite unusual. Typically, human figures are often depicted in a squatting position with parts of a bird's anatomy incorporated into their body. It is possible that the "v" shape on this example's handle is a representation of the wings of a bird. It is more likely that the design of this spatula is representative of the flying fox. Flying foxes are large bats. Some species are native to the Pacific region. Some cultures within the Milne Bay area use this animal as a totemic symbol for family clans. Flying foxes are also one of the animals that cultures from the interior of Papua New Guinea use to symbolize headhunting and the belief that life and death are closely tied to each other.

### Dimensions

12 1/2 × 6 7/8 × 1 in. (31.8 × 17.5 × 2.5 cm)