

Basic Detail Report



Chest Ornament Currency (Kap Kap)

Date

mid 19th - early 20th Century

Medium

Clam shell, turtle shell and fiber

Description

Kap-kaps are shell ornaments worn by men of high status.

The ornaments would be attached to fiber bands or string and could be worn around the forehead or the neck. This example is unusual because two shell discs are attached to each other. All known examples of kap-kaps are worn individually. In addition, kap-kaps were valued for their smooth and polished surfaces. Achieving such a surface was time consuming yet essential to the kap-kap's appearance. The surface of the smaller disc bears a natural swirl pattern and ridges. It also lacks a central hole through which the turtle shell overlay would be secured.

Dimensions

6 1/2 × 2 3/4 × 1/8 in. (16.5 × 7 × 0.3 cm)