



Shield (Wörrumbi)

Date

20th Century

Primary Maker

Mendi

Medium

Wood, fiber and pigment

Description

War was common in Mendi society until at least the middle of the 20th Century. In combat, the Mendi have had three distinct types of shields. Based on the form and general design of this shield it is a wörrumbi, a medium-sized, elongated ovoid bowman's shield. There were both lighter and heavier variants, but the wörrumbi was favored as it allowed for a happy medium of mobility and defense. This shield appears to be carved from a hardwood strong enough to shatter or deflect bone or palm arrows on impact. Abstract, geometric designs are

most common, and the semi-circles seen on this shield as well as the central yellow band carved in relief are also common fixtures. The white, yellow, and red pigments were the three most common pigments. If the central figure is red it indicates that the clan has killed an enemy, if it is white then it means someone from the clan has been lost.

Dimensions

55 × 18 3/4 × 3 1/2 in. (139.7 × 47.6 × 8.9 cm)