



## Shield

### Date

20th Century

### Primary Maker

Melpa

### Medium

Wood, fiber, cassowary feathers and pigment

### Description

Little is written on the shields of Mt. Hagan Highland's Melpa tribe, but due to the proximity of groups in the Mt. Hagan area there was a lot of trading of ideas between these groups and so the shields of the area surrounding Mt. Hagan all share a number of features. Full sized war shields almost all had rattan binding or other decorative distinction along their top edge, here we can see that this has further been adorned with cassowary feathers as was common across many large highland shields. The neighboring Wahgi word for these shields was kumbe

reipe, roughly meaning wooden wall. The tree was cut and split with wedges into the desired shape. When dry it was sanded down with leave and holes were bored so that a fiber rope shoulder harness could be attached. The knotting used leaves a distinctive triangle or square depending on whether three or four holes were used. Designs were rarely incised, but rather painted geometric shapes in black, white, yellow, red, and blue.

### Dimensions

68 1/2 × 20 3/4 × 3 1/8 in. (174 × 52.7 × 7.9 cm)