



Eating Bowl (Khomongu)

Date

19th to 20th Century

Primary Maker

Nagum Boiken

Medium

Clay

Description

Eating vessels known as khomongu to the Boiken of Papua New Guinea were an essential part of every day and ceremonial life in a village. Pottery was made mostly for local consumption and was not traded widely since every neighboring community had their own respective industries. While khomongu were owned individually by men and women, the process of crafting and designing was solely done by men. Depending on how ornately decorated a khomongu was crafted, in turn determined the purpose that vessel would serve; a more elaborately designed piece meant it would not be used domestically and instead, more so for ritualistic activities. Those vessels not used in ceremonies were used as sago storage containers. Sago had primordial significance to the Boiken because it exemplified natural abundance and self-sufficiency; as this plant did not need very much labor in comparison to taro or yams. The majority of khomongu designs originate from the flora and fauna of the surrounding environment.

Dimensions

7 1/2 × 11 5/8 × 10 1/2 in. (19.1 × 29.5 × 26.7 cm)