



Ancestor Figure (Hampatong)

Date

late 19th to early 20th Century

Primary Maker

Dayak

Medium

Wood and shell

Description

This is a carved male figure made from wood and shell, probably carved by the Ngaju Dayak of Borneo, Indonesia in the late 19th or early 20th Centuries. The figure is carved with a braided hat, sits upon a base carved with flowers, and features round shells for eyes. Hampatong is a general term used to describe sculptures of various sizes that protect villages, fields, community spaces and other important locations from dangerous spirits and ill will. Hampatong are divided into two types: tajahan, which honor the dead, and pataho, guardian figures. The fierce, wide eyes of this figure may suggest it is the pataho type, these would be the primary weapon used by the figure to defend against evil spirits.

Dimensions

23 × 7 3/8 × 4 in. (58.4 × 18.7 × 10.2 cm)