

Basic Detail Report



Oil Dish (Sedre Ni Waiwai)

Date

19th Century

Medium

Wood

Description

Fijian oil dishes, sedre ni waiwai in the vernacular, were used to hold scented coconut oil intended for use only within sacred sites by Fijian priests during important occasions. During these rituals, the subject would be anointed in oil from this bowl, which has left a dark, rich patina. The shape of this bowl is rather unusual. Based on the patina, size and secondary basin, this is an oil dish and not for kava (yaqona in Fijian vernacular) consumption, however, the larger basin appears to replicate the shape of a yaqona bowl. Though some instances do exist where there are two adjoined basins, they tend to be the same size. By far the majority of Fijian oil dishes have a leaf-shaped basin with a geometrically incised handle—instead we see similar geometric carvings decorating the beam which conjoins the two basins. Whether this design has some greater importance, is indicative of the dish's point of origin, or was the result of the carver's artistic preferences is unclear.

Dimensions

6 1/2 × 4 1/8 × 16 in. (16.5 × 10.5 × 40.6 cm)