

Basic Detail Report



Drum

Date

20th Century

Primary Maker

latmul

Medium

Wood and plant fiber

Description

This is a drum made by the latmul culture of Papua New Guinea's Middle Sepik River region. Instruments were important along the Sepik as a mode of communication and for playing music on varied ceremonial occasions. Crocodiles play a central role in the art and culture of the latmul people, as the motif is often associated with strength, power, and manhood. According to an latmul creation myth, the Earth was initially covered by an ancient ocean, and the crocodile would dive to the bottom and bring back mud masses on its back which became an island when it surfaced. The land of the island would grow and harden, continuing to rest on the back of the crocodile. Traditionally latmul men practiced scarification

to give their backs the appearance of crocodile scales.

Dimensions

25 × 8 3/8 × 7 3/8 in. (63.5 × 21.3 × 18.7 cm)