



Monkey-Man Figure

Date

mid 20th Century

Primary Maker

Jimmy Mtoched

Medium

Wood and shell

Description

This is a Palauan monkey-man figure made by Jimmy Mtoched, an apprentice woodcarver, in 1969. According to researchers, earlier examples of these types of wooden statues were first produced on Tobi Island in the western Caroline Islands. Trade networks allowed for other similar squatting figures to appear in other areas of Oceania.

Monkey-men figures were originally carved as tokens for the deceased and used as house or ancestral shrines for the spirit of the dead. Although similar statues of this design are no longer significant as ancestral shrines, they

have gained monetary value to carvers as items of barter. According to the donor, Jimmy Mtoched was a student of a well-known carver named John Paul. Mtoched often visited the donor bringing carved creations designed or started by Paul. Eventually Mtoched started to sell his own carved work and served as a consistent wood carving source for the donor.

Dimensions

8 3/4 × 5 1/8 × 4 3/4 in. (22.2 × 13 × 12.1 cm)