



Monkey-Man Figure

Date

mid 20th Century

Medium

Wood and shell

Description

This is a Palauan monkey-man figure collected from the island country of Palau and dates back to the 20th century. 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.

Dimensions

7 3/4 × 5 1/8 × 4 3/4 in. (19.7 × 13 × 12.1 cm)