



Bark Cloth Beater (Ike)

Date
19th Century

Medium
Wood

Description

Across Oceania, cloth is made by pounding bark from the paper mulberry tree against a wooden anvil with a bark cloth beater or ike until it has the consistency of fabric. Due to trade between Fiji, Tonga and Samoa, the bark cloth beaters used on the three island chains tend to bear several similarities. This oval-shaped example is most characteristic of Fiji and inspired by an older Melanesian style of beater. Beaters are made from a tough pine found throughout much of Oceania which is colloquially called ironwood. Rather than being made by the women who cultivate and later create bark cloths, on Fiji the beaters are carved by the same male woodworkers who craft clubs—it is the reason why at least one side of many four-sided beaters is sometimes carved with the intricate incisions seen on Fijian clubs.

Dimensions
2 5/16 × 2 1/8 × 10 1/4 in. (5.9 × 5.4 × 26 cm)