



Club (Alafolo or Afui)

Date

early 20th Century

Medium

Wood and lime

Description

This club, known in the vernacular as alafolo or afui, originates from Malaita Island, one of a group making up the country of Solomon Islands. It was collected during a field expedition in 2004. Its design is unique to Malaita Island. Characterized by both the carvings at the very top of the club and the two triangular flanges located just below, this club would have been used in combat. Interestingly, the club features two highly abstracted anthropomorphic forms. The two flanges are not functional, i.e. they do not serve as hitting edges, but are instead noses to two stylized faces. Prior to gatherings, the incised lines of the carvings are filled in with a white

pigment made from lime. War clubs were very common in the islands that make up Melanesia, including the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and New Guinea. Primarily wielded in tribal conflicts, clubs made of heavy wood and occasionally fitted with stone heads were highly effective bludgeoning tools. War clubs had other uses too. They could be employed in agriculture and symbolic war clubs were often created for the sole purpose of being placed beside a deceased warrior as they prepared for the journey into the afterworld.

Dimensions

38 3/4 × 2 1/8 × 5/8 in. (98.4 × 5.4 × 1.6 cm)