



Parrying Shield (Qauata)

Date

20th Century

Medium

Wood

Description

This parrying shield, the vernacular name for which is Qauata, comes from the Santa Cruz Islands, a subgroup of islands within the country of Solomon Islands. Used to block or deflect attack by spear, parrying shields also functioned as striking weapons. The wide blade shape represents a diving fish and the raised ridge down its center terminates into a representation of a sharp-winged frigate bird. The combination of animal and/or human representations in Solomon Islands art amplifies the power of spirit that is inseparable from nature. Additionally, qauata are reported to have the ability to deflect evil spirits away during male initiation ritual.

Dimensions

34 1/4 × 13 3/4 × 1 in. (87 × 34.9 × 2.5 cm)