

Basic Detail Report



Canoe Bailer

Date

20th Century

Primary Maker

Massim

Medium

Wood

Description

This canoe bailer, used to remove the water that canoes take on while at sea, is just one of many functional and decorative objects traditionally found aboard a Kula trade canoe. It was made by an unrecorded individual of the Massim culture residing in Papua New Guinea's Milne Bay Province. Canoes are the primary language of trade along the Kula ring, a ceremonial trade route in Papua New Guinea's Milne Bay Province. Decorated canoe parts, such as wave splitters (canoe prows), their finials, and splashboards which are transversely socketed into the

ends of canoes, signal the arrival of a trader and identify the community they are associated with. Their carvings, black, white, and red palette, and beautiful shell adornments are designed by Massim craftsmen to magically influence one's trade partners into making disadvantageous exchanges. The patterns of carving and painting on these pieces are unique to the various communities that trade around the Kula ring, making fleets easy to identify. However, some motifs like the rolling forms of waves, coiled serpents, and key navigational stars are universal within Massim groups.

Dimensions

19 1/8 × 8 3/4 × 5 in. (48.6 × 22.2 × 12.7 cm)