



Club, Kanak Bird Beak (kana), 19th Century, New Caledonia



800 EUR

Period : 19th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Solid wood

Length : 75 cm

Description

19th-Century Kanak War Club (Kana)

Origin: New Caledonia (Kanak People, Melanesia)

Date: 19th century

Material: Hardwood (likely Casuarina or Ironwood)

Dimensions: Length 75 cm × Width 32.5 cm

Condition: Very good, with rich patina, signs of use, and an old fracture visible in the photos

Description

A sculptural and powerful Kana war club from the Kanak people of New Caledonia, dated to the 19th century. Entirely hand-carved from a single piece of dense tropical hardwood, the club exhibits the iconic L-shaped form, designed for forceful close-combat strikes.

Dealer

Art Classique

curiosités, art premier et Asiatique

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The striking head features a stylized bird's beak motif, symbolizing ancestral protection, status, and warrior authority. The overall balance and flow of the form reflect both aesthetic refinement and martial utility.

The shaft bears a rich, aged patina, with visible signs of authentic handling. There is an old break near the head of the club (see photos); stable and unrepaired, this flaw does not compromise the integrity of the piece and speaks to its long history. No modern restorations.

Cultural Context

The Kana was more than a weapon--it was a symbol of rank and ancestral connection, used in ritual dances, formal exchanges, and as part of a chief's regalia. Bird-headed clubs were reserved for high-status individuals and carried deep spiritual resonance.

Comparable examples are housed in major museum collections, including the Musée du Quai Branly, British Museum, and Australian Museum.