



Monumental Ceremonial Mask With Lid Covering



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Period : 20th century

Condition : Bon état

Description

Sepik Region, Papua New Guinea 20th century or earlier
Height: 60 cm. Jean-Pierre Dutilleux

Collection -- published

item PROVENANCE Jean-Pierre Dutilleux

Collection, assembled during fieldwork in Papua

New Guinea. LITERATURE Illustrated in:

TRIBES - The First People, by Jean-Pierre

Dutilleux (VILO). This mask is the specimen

reproduced in the book. DESCRIPTION An

important ceremonial mask from the Sepik

region, remarkable for the precision of its formal

construction and the exceptional quality of its

surface. Carved in an elongated oval shape, the

face is reduced to its essential elements: wide,

openwork eye sockets, a protruding nose defining

the central axis, and a slightly open mouth. This

economy of form lends the piece a sculptural

Dealer

Collection

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presence of great intensity, bordering on abstraction. The upper portion is entirely covered with a dense application of shell inlays, carefully affixed to form a continuous, vibrant surface. This covering extends along the nasal ridge, accentuating the mask's verticality and frontal orientation. The shell lids, now weathered to deep golden-brown hues, bear witness to long and repeated use. The edges retain traces of plant fibers, indicating that the object was part of a larger ceremonial ensemble.

ANALYSIS This type of mask is part of the great sculptural traditions of the Sepik, where carved forms embody ancestral presences, spiritual entities, or invisible forces. The specimen on display is particularly notable for:- its monumental size (60 cm)- the density and quality of its inlay- the visual balance between smooth surfaces and organic texture- its powerful, immediately recognizable frontal presence

The use of shell inlays--materials associated with value, trade, and prestige--further reinforces the work's symbolic significance.

IMPORTANCE This mask is of major interest as a published and documented specimen, reproduced in a reference work devoted to the arts of the Sepik. As such, it transcends the scope of an ethnographic object to become part of an established body of works recognized both in academic circles and on the art market. Its inclusion in a collection assembled in the field by Jean-Pierre Dutilleux further reinforces its authenticity, coherence, and desirability.

CONDITION Good overall condition. Wear and patina consistent with age and ritual use. Slight losses in the peripheral organic elements.

MARKET POSITIONING A rare opportunity to acquire a published Sepik mask from a renowned field collection, featuring a strong sculptural presence. Comparable, unpublished examples with less visual impact generally command significantly lower prices.