



Casuar Bone Lime Spatula - Iatmul - Chambri - Papua New Guinea



250 EUR

Period : 20th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Bone

Length : 34

Description

Lime spatula made of cassowary bone - Iatmul - Chambri - Wosera-Gaui - Papua New Guinea
Lime spatula made of cassowary bone, carved with a figure of a fish eagle, a metaphor for the headhunter. Long and elegant, this spatula is carved from a cassowary bone and features at its tip a remarkable figure of a bird of prey, whose powerful and naturalistic character contrasts with the delicacy of the material. Lime spatulas play an important role in the material culture of the Middle Sepik peoples. They were used to scoop lime from a container and then bring it to the mouth to mix it with areca nuts (Areca catechu) in the preparation of betel, a practice widespread in New Guinea. Beyond this everyday use, these objects could take on a ceremonial and symbolic dimension. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, in

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particular, holds several Iatmul or Chambrilime spatulas and containers and highlights their role in social and ritual practices. In Sepik art, the animal figures carved on these objects are not mere ornaments. They refer to a rich system of representations in which animals, ancestors, and supernatural beings are intimately linked. The depiction of the fish-eating eagle, here associated with the figure of the headhunter, gives this spatula a strong symbolic dimension, evoking power, predation, and warrior status. Carving in cassowary bone is particularly characteristic of the region. Comparable examples are held in several major international museum collections, notably at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston. The latter holds a Sepik-style lime spatula made of cassowary bone measuring 36.3 cm, very similar in size to our specimen. Probably first half of the 20th century. Origin: Iatmul / Chambri, Wosera-Gai, Papua New Guinea. 34 cm long. Provenance: private collection in Nièvre. Bibliographic and comparative references: -- The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Lime Spatula (Tap), Iatmul, Middle Sepik, inv. 1978.412.821. -- The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Ceremonial Lime Container (Bandi Na Iavo), Iatmul or Chambri. -- Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Lime Container and Spatula, peoples of the Sepik, cassowary bone, 36.3 cm, inv. 98.479.A-B. -- Dorotheum, Vienna, Very fine Sepik lime container with spatula, ca. 1900, cassowary bone, 37 cm. The piece is described as representing, in the form of a bird, the link between the living and the ancestors.