



Ceremonial Initiate's Lime Case - Rooster Head - Iatmul - Papua New Guinea

300 EUR

Period : 20th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Solid wood

Length : 86



Description

Ceremonial Initiate's Lime Case - Rooster's Head - Iatmul - Papua New Guinea
Ceremonial initiation lime container, made of bamboo, wood, woven basketwork, and seashells, decorated with a slender figure with a rooster's head. Notable for its slender proportions and the richness of its composition, this lime container combines a bamboo body with carved and woven elements, embellished with seashells. At its end, a slender anthropomorphic figure, surmounted by a rooster's head, forms a sculptural ornament characteristic of Middle Sepik art. Among the Iatmul, lime containers, called bandi naiavo, played an important role in material culture and initiation ceremonies. They contained lime obtained from burnt shells or coral, used along with areca nuts in betel chewing. These objects

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held a significance far greater than their utilitarian function. Toward the end of their period of initiatory seclusion, the young men received richly ornamented cases from their maternal uncles, which they displayed upon their public reappearance and during ceremonies on the dance floor. This gift marked their new social status and their entry into the world of men. The animal figure crowning the object is part of an iconographic repertoire in which birds, ancestral figures, and supernatural beings occupy a central place. The rooster, prized in the region for its plumage and vigor, frequently appears in the ornamentation of ceremonial cases from the Sepik, sometimes associated with crocodile figures or ancestral faces. With its exceptional dimensions of 86 cm and the combination of bamboo, carved wood, basketwork, and shell, this example attests to the sophistication of Iatmul ritual arts and to the importance placed on the adornments that accompanied the decisive stages of social life.

First half of the 20th century
86 cm long
Provenance: private collection in Nièvre.

References and comparisons:-- The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Ceremonial Lime Container (Bandi Na Iavo), Iatmul or Chambri, late 19th-early 20th century, inv. 1979.206.1457.-- Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge, Lime box, Iatmul, Palimbai, Middle Sepik, inv. 1935.17 B, bamboo case decorated with a carved figure and a bird.-- Sotheby's, Iatmul Ceremonial Lime Container (Bandi Na Iavo), catalog entry by Philippe Peltier on lime cases presented to initiates upon completion of their seclusion.