

SA1166839

latmul carved wooden
anthropomorphic flute stopper,
Middle Sepik River Papua New
Guinea

Price

Sold

Item Reference: SA1166839

Date of manufacture: 1930

Dimensions

Height = 33 cm (13.0")

Width = 22 cm (8.7")

Depth = 9 cm (3.5")

Description

An latmul carved wooden anthropomorphic flute stopper, Middle Sepik River, Papua New Guinea, the painted face with cowrie inset eyes and vine bark collar. 33 cms high. From the collection of Nicolas Kinlock, collected 2014 in Papua New Guinea. NB: The latmul are an indigenous group residing along the middle Sepik River in Papua New Guinea, known for their rich cultural heritage, particularly their intricate carvings, elaborate spiritual beliefs, and significant role in regional trade networks before European contact. Their culture is deeply tied to the river, with their villages built on stilts to withstand seasonal floods, and their religious practices often feature the crocodile, which they revere as a powerful spirit. The flute stopper' is a carved, ornamental effigy that seals the end of a hollow bamboo flute used in sacred ceremonies. Not just a decorative piece, the stoppers served as a vital part of the flute, transforming it into a voice for spirits, ancestors, or ceremonial leaders during initiations and other rituals. They often depict stylized human figures, animal spirits, or mythological beings, creating a visual and spiritual link to the unseen world.

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