



Basketry Mask (Baba)

Date

ca. 1945

Primary Maker

Abelam people

Medium

reed, feathers, plant fiber, pigment and encrustation

Description

Basketry masks are found widely in Papua New Guinea but are particularly associated with the Abelam who probably acquired them from the Mountain Arapesh people they encountered on their migration into the hills north of the Sepik River valley. These masks are associated with the wale, spirits associated with specific locales such as a stream or spring or a particular tract of land. The Abelam wear the basketry masks with a leafy costume and strands of yellow nuts. The masks are associated with the Yam Cult and are said to be pigs as intermediaries between the world of the living and the land of spirits of the dead.

Dimensions

Overall: 12 1/2 x 9 3/8 x 13 1/2 in. (31.8 x 23.8 x 34.3 cm)