



Woman's Headdress (Mpaan)

Date

mid 20th century

Primary Maker

Kuba people

Medium

raffia, cotton, glass beads and cowrie shells

Description

Kuba artisans have long been renowned for their cultural productions, much of which was commissioned by the ruling class as status symbols. Conical headdresses, called mpaan, were created to adorn the bodies of prominent women during funerals. This mpaan has an abundance of cowrie shells a traditional form of currency in many African nations, which symbolize the patron's wealth or noble origins. The geometric motif on the rim is traditional and appears in various forms of Kuba art from textiles to scarification. The colors of the beads may reference virtues the patron wants to be associated with: blue for high rank, green for land and growth, and white

for purity. Description by Curatorial Intern, Xavier Lane, University of Miami Class of 2024

Dimensions

Overall: 8 1/2 x 9 1/2 x 9 1/4 in. (21.6 x 24.1 x 23.5 cm)