

Female Figure

Date

not dated

Primary Maker

Ibibio people

Medium

wood, paint and iron nails

Description

Although this figure has been identified in some previous publications as Igbo, there seems to be little doubt that it is Ibibio. The Igbo and Ibibio share some stylistic characteristics and hairstyles but that is generally because the Igbo are very inclined to borrow from their neighbors. The body painting, if that is what it is, could have been inspired by Igbo uli body painting worn by young women on festive occasions. The Ekong (or Ekon) society of the Ibibio uses puppets in dramatizations that offer social commentary on current conditions, sometimes involving neighbors of the Ibibio such as the Igbo. This piece has movable arms and seems to be a puppet. It does, however, differ a bit from the usual Ekong female figures that depict young women who are undergoing the process of initiation to womanhood. Those figures wear heavy hip beads but to have the plump body and legs shown here.

Dimensions

Overall: 24 x 7 1/8 x 5 1/2 in. (61 x 18.1 x 14 cm)



