

## Staff (Tunggal Punaluan)

### Date

20th century

### Primary Maker

Batak people

### Medium

wood and stain

### Description

Batak shamans use staffs in divination, to ward off danger, and to produce rain. They are used in war dances and also carried for protection in battle and to frighten the enemy. Additional materials such as horsehair or feathers are added to the top of a staff in use. The staff derives its magical power from the incorporation of sacrificial material (pupuk) from a young male child. Pupuk is placed in a hole in the head of the top figure, which usually represents a rider on horseback wearing a vertical headdress. The tongue or mouth of the horse touches the top of the head of the figure below it, a gesture of linkage found throughout the staff. The rest of the figures are comprised of humans, serpents (nagas), crocodiles, buffalos, dogs and other creatures derived from myths that describe the linkage of heaven and earth.

### Dimensions

Overall: 32 1/8 x 1 x 2 1/8 in. (81.6 x 2.5 x 5.4 cm)



