



Dance Wand

Date

early 20th century

Primary Maker

Artist Unknown

Medium

wood and stain

Description

Dance wands are the personal possessions of Bonito Cult members who use them in dances consecrating new canoes and canoe houses. The dancers imitate diving bonito, a fish considered to be the most delectable and desirable of all things and the focus of much of Solomon Islands ceremonial activity. Bonito also symbolize the unpredictable and dangerous as they appear suddenly and are always surrounded by sharks. Sea gulls and frigate birds congregate above the water to feed off flying fish and others leaping out of the water to avoid the feeding bonito and sharks. Clubs of chiefs and powerful individuals are kept after their deaths as sacred objects.

Dimensions

Overall: 39 x 6 3/4 x 2 in. (99.1 x 17.1 x 5.1 cm)