

Basic Detail Report



Bark Belt

Date

early 20th century

Primary Maker

Artist Unknown

Medium

bark, pigment, twine and shell buttons

Description

The main item of “clothing” worn by Papuan men is a wide belt of incised and painted bark. The owner himself may make such a personal item or he may get an expert to do it or at least help him with finishing touches. Such belts also are given as gifts or used in ceremonial exchanges. The abstract undulating patterns seen here are quite typical of the Papuan Gulf region as are the faces with huge round eyes. They are the bloodshot eyes of a great warrior or sorcerer looking for his enemies. The triangular forehead is darkened for emphasis because the brow is associated with warfare and thunderclouds.

Dimensions

Overall (Coiled): 5 x 8 3/8 in. (12.7 x 21.3 cm)