



Dance Paddle

Date

late 19th to early 20th century

Primary Maker

Wosera people

Medium

wood and paint

Description

The Maprik highlands north of the Middle Sepik River region are home to some of the most brilliantly painted of all New Guinea art. Maprik art is focused on the House Tambaran where spirits dwell during the initiation rites of the Yam Cult. During this period the initiates experience an overwhelming onslaught of visual images and sounds, the essence of the ancestors. They feel themselves disintegrating and multiplying and merging with the ancestral spirits. The most common images are human heads, with yellow butterfly pattern across the upper face and wearing a tall flame-shaped headdress, emerging three-dimensionally from a flat, board-like background. Another favorite motif is rows of squatting figures, the

nggwalndu-puti, ancestors as creative beings. This form of dance paddle is gripped by putting the hand through the opening at the base.

Dimensions

Overall: 32 1/4 x 17 1/4 x 2 in. (81.9 x 43.8 x 5.1 cm)