



Male Figure [Ere Ibeji]

Date

20th century

Primary Maker

Nigeria, Yoruba people

Medium

wood, stain, glass beads, cotton string and pigment

Description

Ibeji are twin figures carved to replace a twin or twins who have died. The soul of a deceased twin is a very special spirit and is honored and tenderly cared for as if the twin were still alive. The wooden figure is anointed with camwood powder, rubbed with indigo, fed, clothed, decorated with beads or other ornaments, carried about, and put to bed at night. Ibeji have been appropriately called 'affectionate presences'. The surviving twin cares for a figure of a deceased twin. If both twins die, their mother or another family member cares for the figures. Since twins run in families and are risky births, some families accumulate large numbers of ibeji over the course of several generations.

Dimensions

8 3/4 x 3 x 2 5/8"