Iatmul
Middle Sepik River

NEW GUINEA

Big Ancestor Mask (Abwan)
Basketry, overmodelled skull
Clay, hair, shells. H. 102 cm.
Ceremonial House, Kanganaman Village
c. 1930 with ancestral skulls in the four small openings.


Iatmul. Canoe and Canoe shield with ‘ancestor face’ mask (detail)
4 corner posts of the Iatmul ceremonial house represent protective bush spirits. The bird image represents the fighting spirit of the Iatmul villages and was commonly displayed on the spires of the men’s houses.

Flute head rep. the eagle

Roof ridge sculpture of the eagle and its mother
Female monster is represented by the gable mask. The house itself is conceived of as the mythical primal woman. The mask is the face and the house the body.

Female gable figures, interior and exterior.

Fertile female is represented by the Female Figure: Guards the entrance to the upper story of the men’s house.

Female figure from the interior of a men’s Ceremonial house. H. 146cm.
Overmodeled skulls - Bone, clay, hair, shell.
Portraits of deceased ancestors and slain enemies.
L. H. 17 cm.
R. H. 21.5 cm.
Mai masks (dance in pairs representing mythical brothers and sisters. They are associated with initiation of youth into the men’s society but belong to individual clans. Wood attached to basketry. Costume of plant material.

Iatmul. Mask representing a powerful female spirit. Painted wood and basketry.

Scarification marks representing the crocodile’s teeth on the initiate’s back.
Hook with 2 heads prolonged by bird beaks. Wood. H. 46cm. Iatmul or Chambri.

Lime container for new initiate. Iatmul. H. 68 cm.

Debating Stool. Wood, pigment. H. 112.5cm.
Flute ornament (mask)
Elongated face evokes
Faces of ancestor as well as
Initiation face masks.

Iatmul man playing the
sacred flute carved in the
shape of a small person.

Flute head representing the eagle symbolic
of the village’s warring strength. L. 75.8 cm.

Hourglass drum,
eagle & crocodile
motifs. H. 86.5 cm.
Hook figures (Yipwon) Korewori River area.

H. 7 ft. 8.5 in (2.35m)

H. 7 ft.

7 ft. 2 in (2m 18cm)
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