



The Paul Guillaume Admiralty Islands Ladle

A superb and archaic ceremonial food ladle for an important man. The ornate handle is carved with the stylized head of an ancestor wearing a “war-charm” at the nape of the neck. The handle is carved as two dentate engraved uprights. Ornate ladles were used by men of importance and quite possibly the decoration of the handle is linked to the status of the man in the hierarchy of initiated men the tribe or in a Secret Society. Most ladles have geometric handles – figurative examples are rare.

Admiralty Islands, Bismarck Archipelago, PNG, Melanesia. Coconut shell, wood, bush fiber, Putty-Nut (Parinarium nut paste), and lime infill. 30,7 x 13,5 cm, 19th century.

The ladle, one of the very few Oceanic pieces owned by Guillaume, figures in the photographic inventory of the Paul Guillaume stock, a copy of which is in the data base of the Musée de l’Orangerie in Paris.

There is a strong possibility that the subliminal « africanism » of this ladle was the reason for his interest. I have noted that he owned a number of Admiralty Island lime-sticks, dark wood staff like objects that again have also a certain underlying feeling of Africa-like sculptural forms. Mounted on a Kichizo Inagaki signed wood base. With a period, yet post-Inagaki screw - the wood support for the ladle was obviously broken at some early point and the ladle screwed directly through the handle to the base as can be seen in the Guillaume stock photograph. The base carries both the inv. N° 47 in white paint as well as the original engraved bronze plaque inscribed in error “Hebrides” (Vanuatu of today).

Exhibitions

"NUTS...!" THE COCONUT IN OCEANIA. Galerie Meyer - Oceanic & Eskimo Art, Paris, Parcours des Mondes 2018

Literature:

Pub. : "NUTS...!" THE COCONUT IN OCEANIA. Galerie Meyer - Oceanic & Eskimo Art, Paris, 2018, pp. 7, 8.

Ref. : Neverman, Dr. Hans. ADMIRALITATS-INSELN, ERGEBNISSE DER SUDSEE-EXPEDITION 1908-1910. Hamburg, Friederichsen, de Gruyter & Co. 1934.

Ohnemus, Sylvia: AN ETHNOLOGY OF THE ADMIRALTY ISLANDS, The Alfred Bühler Collection, Museum der Kulturen, Basel, Crawford House Publishing, Bathurst, 1998.