



Asmat Headhunters Necklace

A very important large necklace, probably for an Asmat headhunter. The necklace represents a stylized phallus covered partly with a fringed skirt or cache-sexe made of Jobs Tears seed. The neck strap is decorated with several pieces of bamboo that are probably tally markers for the number of heads taken.

Asmat Area, Irian Jaya ?, Indonesian New Guinea. Gourd, feathers, seeds, and fiber.

Literature:

See a similar but un-identified example in "Asmat, Leben mit den Ahnen" by Konrad & Konrad & Schneebaum, 1981, Fig a, p. 150, INV. N° N019, col. Konrad. The only other examples known of these larger necklaces presently are the one in the collection of Ursula & Gunter Konrad. The one in the Friede collection, NY (ex Galerie Meyer); one in the collections of the Musée de l'Homme, Paris and one other in a private collection. They all seem to be more recent than the present example or at least show much less wear.

