



Sepik Figure

A kandimbwag, or standing male ancestor figure shown with feet together and hands resting on his hips. The head is large, occupying a third of the total height of the sculpture. The face is centered around a long pointed nose with enlarged and arched nostrils joining the chest. The coffee bean eyes are placed under a double arched brow under a pointed cap. The body shows deep scarifications on the shoulders, belly and back. The kandimbwag is used during the initiation of young boys especially during the "bleeding" of the penis, an important moment in the course of the intitation where a blade of thorny grass is introduced into the urethra and removed abruptly. The boy wears a belt of tapa at the end of which is hung a kandimbwag effigy like this one. Lower Sepik River, PNG, Melanesia. Wood with a red patina and traces of age and use. 18,5 x 4,3 cm. Late 19th/early 20th century.