



PORAPORA Bone Mask

A small mask, characteristic of the corpus of disconcerting objects brought back by Pierre Langlois and Marcel Evrard during their trip on the Porpora River in 1959/1960. This is a complete specimen in its construction and corresponds perfectly to the majority of masks of this typology which are made with the frontal section of a pig's skull.

The function and use of this type of mask remains obscure and their "raison d'être", although sometimes compared to the Maro reliquary figures of the area, is not yet clearly established.

Adjirab People, Porpora River Region, Low Sepik Region, PNG, Melanesia.

Pig skull frontal bone, plant fibers, and cassowary feathers, with a fine patina of age and use.

Height: 23 cm excluding feathers.

Exhibitions

Exhibition : 30 Porpora masks, at the Galerie Claude Bernard, 5 rue des Beaux-Arts, Paris, organized by Marcel Evrard, 6 Oct - 6 Nov 1961. Probably acquired at the exhibition.

Literature:

Ref.: Meyer, Anthony JP: OCEANIC ART / OZEANISCHE KUNST / OCEANIC ART. Könemann Verlag, Köln. 1995, Fig. 207, p. 198/199.

See similar examples acquired from Claude Bernard : Max Ernst Collection (now the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra) ; Mesnil Collection, Houston ; André Breton Collection (now the Georges Pompidou National Centre for Contemporary Art) ; Odette and René Delenne Collection, Brussels ; Collection The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection - The Museum of Primitive Art (now the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) ; Collection of Fred Deux and Cécile Rheims (now Musée de l'hospice Saint-Roch, Issoudun) (acquired from the Gal. Meyer) ; Galerie Meyer - Oceanic Art (four masks from the collection of Pierre Loeb, by descent to Albert Loeb, 3 of which are in private collections) ; and one from the Daniel Cordier collection. A set of these masks remained in Marcel Evrard's collection and were sold on June 8, 2022 by the auctioneer Ader, at Drouot, Paris.