

COLNAGHI



DOGON ARTIST
Partial Ritual Mask

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Mali, 18th century

Partial Ritual Mask

Wood, traces of pigment and ritual deposits

h. 30 cm

11 ³/₄ in.

Provenance

Craig Delora Collection, New York;
Private Collection, Belgium.

Traditionally carved by Dogon blacksmiths from the Bandiagara escarpment in Mali, these masks were kept in caves and rock shelters after their use. The dry desert weather has allowed these sculptures to survive for several generations, making them some of the oldest objects found in sub-Saharan Africa.

There are more than 80 different types of Dogon masks, representing humans, animals or abstract concepts. These are danced in cyclical ceremonies called Dama, elaborate spiritual rituals celebrating important ancestors and to restore cosmic balance in the villages.

Dogon masks are characterized by an extreme reduction of the facial planes to schematic geometric forms and cubistic volumes.

Because of their age and use, these masks can be very weathered like the present example.

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