



Miniature mask

Not on display

Title/Description: Miniature mask

Object Type: Mask

Materials: Elephant ivory

Measurements: h. 78 x w. 40 x d. 35 mm

Accession Number: 657

Historic Period: Late 19th/20th century

Production Place: Africa, Democratic Republic of Congo

Cultural Group: Pende

Credit Line: Purchased with support from Robert and Lisa Sainsbury, 1976

Minyaki, or *ikhoko* (carved things) are ivory miniatures which were worn on a necklet to armlet by men who had undergone the initiation rites of the Mbuya secret society. To some extent, they were protective amulets, but their main purpose was to remind the initiate of his symbolic death and rebirth into adult society and the lessons and obligations that he learned during his period of seclusion in the bush. They were generally worn on a string of red or blue glass beads.

This mask shows the facial scarification, a zig-zag line along jaw- and brow-line which suggests hair, and the three-pointed hat worn by a chief of the Mbuya.

Margret Carey, 1997

Entry taken from *Robert and Lisa Sainsbury Collection, Vol. 2: Pacific, African and Native North American Art*, edited by Steven Hooper (Yale University Press, 1997) p. 191.

Provenance

Purchased by the Sainsbury Centre, University of East Anglia from K. J. Hewett in 1976 out of funds

provided by Robert and Lisa Sainsbury.
