



Neck pendant

On display

Title/Description: Neck pendant

Object Type: Pendant

Materials: Clam shell, Fibre, Turtle shell

Measurements: h. 160 x w. 219 x d. 23 mm

Accession Number: 755

Historic Period: 20th century

Production Place: Oceania, Pacific, Solomon Islands, Southeast region

Crescent-shaped neck pendants of this type were made in the Malaita and San Cristobal area and were worn by men. The turtle shell overlay depicts a frigate bird clutching a fish, probably a bonito. Both these species feature prominently in local iconography, for the frigate bird is associated with protective spirits and is often seen at sea above shoals of bonito, acting as a guide to fishermen.

Special fishing expeditions for bonito were formerly an important part of male initiation rites (see Fox, 1925; Davenport, 1981). Ivens (1927: 393-5) noted that whereas small pendants like 833 were made from local black-lip pearl shell, large examples like 755 had been made since the late nineteenth century from gold-lip pearl shell obtained from European traders.

Steven Hooper, 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. 73.
