

COLNAGHI



A Senufo Bangoro Go Mask

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SENUFO ARTIST

Mali/Ivory Coast
Late 19th–early 20th century

Mask, Bangoro Go

Wood, metal
h: 48 cm; 18 7/8 in.

Provenance

Ex private collection, London
Ex collection Jean-Pierre Boilod, Areuse, Switzerland
Ex collection André Aeschlimann, Rochefort, Switzerland
Ex Galerie Alain Bovis, Paris, 2006
Ex private collection, Belgium



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This extremely refined mask is attributed to a small group of Senufo people living in the northern Ivory Coast. Masks of its type feature a domed forehead rising from an elongated face, usually ending in a point, and a prominent nasal bone. The present mask features two square eye holes set low along the massive nose. In other examples the eye hole placement varies as does the number of eye holes. The present masks also retains a metal bolt affixed to the underside of the nose, from which most likely hung decorative organic matter such as straw. The stark minimalism of this schematic face is striking.

This mask would have been worn by a dancer who introduced a humorous, entertaining element into ceremonies, often arriving before other masquerades, and interacting with the audience. The dancer's movements are inspired by the animal kingdom, especially the monkey. This element of ritual dance, and the mask itself, believed to release *nyama*, the pervasive life force found in animals, essential for maintaining balance and order in the community.

Patrick Girard (b. 1951 in Abidjan, Ivory Coast) did extensive research in the 1990s about these masks, especially in the Kadile region around Tingrela. Girard is a collector, author, researcher and expert in tribal arts with La Cour d'Appel d'Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire. He is a specialist on West African art with field work in the Senufo and Manding area.

He discovered that these masks, who were always erroneously attributed to the Bamana, were in fact from a small group of Senufo people living around Tingrela, in the border region of Ivory Coast and Mali. Worn horizontally and are named bangoro go/gbaangorongo. Patrick Girard has published a documented notice on this mask in *Cultures du Monde, Chefs-d'oeuvre du Musée des Confluences*, 2006.

Comparanda



Examples of Bangoro go in Private Collections

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