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A Bamileke Mu Po Figure

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BAMILEKE ARTIST

Cameroon

Late 19th–early 20th century

Mu Po Figure

Wood

h: 27.3 cm; 10 ³/₄ in.

Provenance

Ex Galerie Khepri, Amsterdam, 1968

Christie's London. *Important Tribal Art*. 23 June 1992, lot 68

Ex Entwistle, London

Binoche et Giquello. *Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie*. 14 November 2019, lot 32

Ex private collection, New York

Exhibited

Art in Cameroon: Sculptural Dialogues. Neuberger Museum of Art, Purchase, NY.

23 April - 14 August 2011

Publications

Lehuard, Raoul. Auction review of Les ventes. *Arts d'Afrique Noire*. no. 83, Autumn 1992, p. 63

Jean-Baptiste Bacquart. *The Tribal Arts of Africa: Surveying Africa's Artistic Geography*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 1998, 2000. p.109. fig.12

Brincard, Marie-Therese, ed. *Art in Cameroon: Sculptural Dialogues*. Purchase, NY: Neuberger Museum of Art. 2011, p. 33, no. 28

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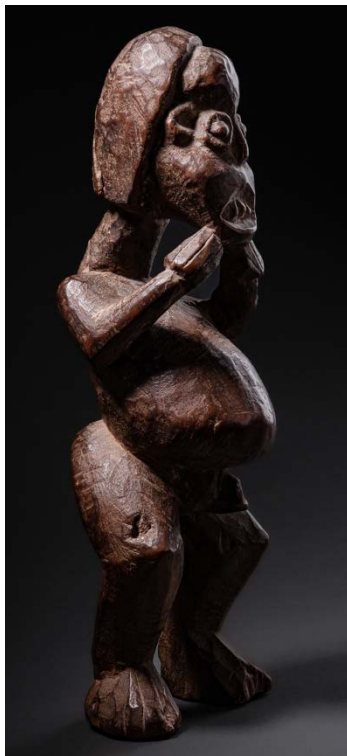
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Bamileke sculptures such as this are called Mu Po. They are healing and protective figures, used in rituals by sorcerers to heal the sick, ward off evil and ensure fertility and protection for pregnant women.

These carved wooden effigies are found in the Cameroons grasslands and are highly praised for their inventiveness.

Mu Po figures combine rounded forms with angular lines creating an effect of controlled tension. They feature a large belly, and an expressive face with almond shaped eyes and an open mouth.

Comparanda



Examples of Mu Po from Private Collections.

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