



PROANTIC
LE PLUS BEAU CATALOGUE D'ANTIQUITES

Rare Kanak "kagu" Wooden Bird Beak Puzzle, New Caledonia, 19th Century



2 800 EUR

Period : 19th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Solid wood

Length : 77 cm

Width : 36 cm

Depth : 8 cm

Description

Rare Kanak war club of the "Kagu" type (Bird's beak) in hardwood, from New Caledonia, Melanesia, 19th century.

This is an exceptional Kanak art collector's item due to its imposing size and its rare balance on this type of object.

This ancient combat tool, carved in a beautiful solid hardwood decorated with a magnificent dark brown and shiny patina, is distinguished by its long cylindrical handle which ends in a stylized bird's head, with an elongated beak, two raised eyes and a crest falling at the back of the neck.

The handle reflects the traditional style of Kanak clubs. Clubs are an integral part of the Kanak

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arsenal. Although several forms exist, the most widespread are divided mainly into two categories: "phallic" brain teasers and those in the shape of a "bird's beak" or turtle.

Their use for war and dances is omnipresent throughout New Caledonia. According to Maurice Leenhardt, these objects are used to express virility during war speeches, an essential aspect of the oral tradition. The different forms do not correspond to a specific use, but reflect regional styles, each socio-political group imprinting its identity on the objects it uses.

These clubs were brandished during the pilous, in particular for the declamation of genealogical speeches, symbolizing masculine virility and power. A drawing in Indian ink on tracing paper, made around 1954, attests to the objects collected before 1900 by the curator Bernier for the "New Caledonian Museum". This model of Kanak puzzle, called "phallic", represents a formidable weapon used in close combat in New Caledonia.