



Face Mask (Mwana Pwo)

Date

not dated

Primary Maker

Chokwe people

Medium

wood and stain

Description

This mask may be a provincial variation of the important masked female entity, Mwana Pwo, who symbolizes the female ancestor, if in fact it is a female. The reddish powder (camwood) rubbed on the mask supports a female designation, as does the absence of male elements such as a prestige headdress and beard. The nose shape (long and thin with small nostrils), sleepy eyes with swollen lids, and mouth with exposed teeth filed to points are all characteristic of Chokwe and related styles. The facial scarification, however, is more like those of the Luba group, precursors of the Lunda Empire, which was eventually overthrown by the Chokwe.

Dimensions

Overall: 10 1/4 x 5 7/8 x 2 7/8 in. (26 x 14.9 x 7.3 cm)