



Carved Lizard

Date

before 1944

Medium

Wood and paint

Description

This painted Carved Lizard was donated to the museum by the same donor who gifted the Model Outrigger Canoe (2022.11.1). Both the Carved Lizard and the Model Outrigger Canoe are documented products of the northern coast of New Guinea, where they were acquired by the donor's father during World War II.

According to the Hudson Museum at the University of Maine, model outrigger canoes were a common trade object produced by local people for foreign visitors to collect on their travels. It is highly likely that the Carved Lizard was created for the same purpose, although examples of similar wooden creatures in other museum collections are scarce. The Carved Lizard, Model Outrigger Canoe, and several other objects, were acquired by the donor's father while he was serving in the US Navy. We know that the donor's father bartered with people from a local village to acquire these objects while he was stationed in New Guinea on September 28, 1944, because he related the news of his purchases to his wife in the US in a letter written on that date. Objects like these demonstrate how local people in places like New Guinea created objects for a market of military personnel who were looking to purchase souvenirs of their time away from home.

Dimensions

Overall: 3 3/4 in. × 21 in. × 1 1/2 in. (9.5 × 53.3 × 3.8 cm)