



Pair of Lightning Serpent Masks

Date

1860-1880

Primary Maker

Nuu-chah-nulth (Nootka)

Medium

Yellow cedar, spruce, fir, paint, red cedar bark, wire, tin can, string, cut nails, cotton fabric

Description

These masks represent the Lightning Serpent, a being unique to Nuu-chah-nulth (Nootka) art and dance. The Lightning Serpent is often associated with the thunderbird and is described as the harpoon of the thunderbird. The thunderbird is often depicted holding a harpoon that is shaped like a lightning bolt. The harpoon is a critically important weapon used by Nuu-chah-nulth (Nootka) whale hunters. Lightning Serpent masks are worn on top of the head at a slight upward angle. They are used in matched

pairs, representing a male and a female.

Dimensions

Overall (Male): 9 1/2 × 6 1/2 × 26 in. (24.1 × 16.5 × 66 cm) Overall (Female): 8 5/8 × 7 × 24 in. (21.9 × 17.8 × 61 cm)