



Nepcetat Mask

Date

c. 1850

Primary Maker

Central Yup'ik

Medium

Wood, swan feathers, old squaw duck, snowy owl feathers, fox teeth, bearded sealskin thong, ochre, seal blood, blue, white, ash pigments

Description

Nepcetat masks were the most powerful masks in the Central Yup'ik culture. Only a shaman could use a Nepcetat mask. A shaman proved his power in healing, divining, and calling the animals to the hunters with a Nepcetat mask. The mask was placed face down on the

ground and the shaman had to raise it from the ground using his face alone. When the shaman could no longer lift the mask or could only do so with greatest difficulty, his power was seen to be on the wane. Nepcetat masks were not discarded after one winter's ceremonial cycle as was the case with all of the other Central Yup'ik masks. After the death of a shaman, the Nepcetat mask was often kept in the family. McIntyre replaced the featherwork and fox teeth on this mask.

Dimensions

Overall: 22 × 33 × 4 3/4 in. (55.9 × 83.8 × 12.1 cm)