

Object Summary



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Carved and Painted Wooden Mask of Jero Luh

19th century

Bali, Indonesia

Wood, polychrome pigments, metal hardware

Overall: 13 1/4 × 11 3/4 × 4 5/8 in. (33.7 × 29.8 × 11.7cm)

The characters of Jero Luh (61.26) and Jero Gede (61.21) are a married couple thought to represent ancestors of the Balinese people. Jero Gede is of Malayo-Indian origin, while his wife Jero Luh is Chinese. Their physical representation is that of opposites, refined and unrefined. Jero Luh is portrayed with a pointed chin and forehead, small nose and perpetual smile. Jero Gede represent a human-like Barong portrayed with fangs and large teeth to indicate his power while his rounded nose and cheeks imply a jolly disposition. When Barong Landung is performed, Jero Luh and Jero Gede are the same height. These larger-than-life sized masks appear in the Barong Landung ritual performed around certain Balinese holy days or when an auspicious signal from priests determine that their apotropaic (evil-averting) abilities are needed. These masks would not be worn by a performer, but instead placed on the faces of large puppets operated by an individual selected to articulate the bamboo frame of the puppets. This causes Jero Gede and Jero Luh to tower as giants above the crowd.