
PAGODA RED



MENDE HELMET MASK

\$1,180

c. 1950 • Sierra Leone • Wood • Collection #CAA1289

W: 9.0" D: 9.5" H: 15.0"

This helmet mask created by the Mende people of Sierra Leone was made for the women of their tribe to wear while dancing. Commissioned by women for their initiation ceremonies, the masks were carved by men to depict the ideal female face. Designed to rest on the shoulders, this mask features a traditionally rippled base, representing the emergence of the spirit from water. The smoothness of the patina and the stylized hairstyle mark this as a mid 20th century example of this very ancient art form.



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