

Rangda, balinese mask

Southeast Asian Collection

Accession Nr.: 91.1 

Type: mask; religious or cult object; puppetry and shadow play; carving

Date of production: 19th century

Place of production: Bali, Indonesia, Southeast Asia

Materials/Technique
s: wood, carved, painted

Dimensions: height: 22. 5 cm
width: 22. 5 cm

A heavily faded Balinese ceremonial mask worn by the witch-like female figure of Rangda known as the embodiment of negative forces, in one of the most important ritual/dance plays Calonarang. The object in the photograph lacks, among other things, the huge mane and the long, protruding tongue.

With her striped dress, long fingernails and enormous power, the witch bewitches the villagers who attack her, turning their curved daggers (kris) against themselves in a ritual suicide attempt.

Although Rangda represents the dark forces, her function is just as important as that of her 'good' counterpart, the lion-shaped Barong. The ritual struggle between the two helps to purify the village, banishing the evil spirits and restoring the cosmic order again and again.

