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## Collections: Arts of Africa: Bwoom Mask

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### Bwoom Mask

Kuba mythology revolves around three figures, each represented by a masquerade character: Woot, the creator and founder of the ruling dynasty; Woot's spouse; and Bwoom. Bwoom's specific identity varies according to different versions of the myth. He may represent the king's younger brother, a person of Twa descent, or a commoner. Embodying a subversive force within the royal court, the Bwoom masquerade is often performed in conflict with the masked figure representing Woot.

Culture: **Bushoong Kuba**

Medium: Wood, cowrie shells, glass beads, fur, leather, cloth, seed pods

Place Made: **Lulua Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo**

Dates: late 19th or early 20th century

Dimensions: 13 3/4 x 8 1/4 x 12 in. (35 x 21 x 30.5 cm) Height with beard: 22 7/16 in. (57 cm) ([show scale](#))

Collections: **Arts of Africa**

Museum Location: This item is on view in **South Gallery, 1st Floor**

Exhibitions:

**African Innovations (August 12, 2011 through date unknown)**

Accession Number: 73.178

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Caption: Bushoong Kuba. *Bwoom Mask*, late 19th or early 20th century. Wood, cowrie shells, glass beads, fur, leather, cloth, seed pods, 13 3/4 x 8 1/4 x 12 in. (35 x 21 x 30.5 cm). Brooklyn Museum, Gift of the Anne Eisner Putnam Collection, 73.178.

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Image: side, 73.178\_edited\_version\_SL1.jpg. Brooklyn Museum photograph

Catalogue Description: Wooden mask of a bearded human face with cowrie shells and glass beads decorating the surface. Bands of dark blue beads an brow and nostrils.

Wide band of white beads and cheeks and bridge of nose. Mixed turquoise and white beads down nose, around mouth and in geometric and chevron patterns on beard and around back of head. Black fur covered leather covers fabric at top of head and chevron pattern of white strips of leather. Undecorated strip of cloth around neckline of mask at back. Beard of white bead rings and enclosed brown seed pods. Cowrie shells and beads in hair of beard. Forehead is round and projecting. There are two rectangular appendages to the chin. CONDITION: Worn. There is a check through the left cheek. Beads and shells are missing throughout. There is a dark brown patina covering the facial area.

Record Completeness: **Best (87%)** |

## Brooklyn Museum

200 Eastern Parkway

Brooklyn, New York 11238-6052

  Eastern Parkway/Brooklyn Museum

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## Hours

Wednesday: 11 a.m.–6 p.m.

Thursday: 11 a.m.–10 p.m.

Friday–Sunday: 11 a.m.–6 p.m.

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