



Collections: Arts of Africa: Mwaash aMbooy Mask

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Mwaash aMbooy Mask

Among the Kuba, masks are thought to be reflections of nature-spirits (*mingesh*) that act as intermediaries between the Supreme Being (Nyeem) and the world of mortals. There are more than twenty different types of masks that function within the men's initiation society. *Moshambwooy* is one of the three most important and represents Woot, the founding hero from whom the Kuba believe themselves to be descended.

Moshambwooy masks are worn by the *nyimi*, or king, of the Kuba or by chiefs in villages. The *nyimi*'s mask is usually made of leopard skin, while those of chiefs are made of antelope skin. The face of this mask is probably antelope skin painted with a design to look like leopard's fur. The nose and ears are carved of wood, and the white beard of fur from the chest of a sheep represents the beard of an old man.

Culture: [Bushoong Kuba](#)

Medium: Bark cloth, leather, pigment, shell, hair, beads, fabric

Place Made: [Lulua Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo](#)

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Dates: late 19th or early 20th century

Dimensions: 19 5/16 x 16 1/8 x 14 3/16 in. (49 x 41 x 36 cm) ([show scale](#))

Collections: [Arts of Africa](#)

Museum Location: ✖ This item is not on view

Accession Number: 22.1582

Credit Line: Museum Expedition 1922, Robert B. Woodward Memorial Fund

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Caption: Bushoong Kuba. *Mwaash aMbooy Mask*, late 19th or early 20th century. Bark cloth, leather, pigment, shell, hair, beads, fabric, 19 5/16 x 16 1/8 x 14 3/16 in. (49 x 41 x 36 cm). Brooklyn Museum, Museum Expedition 1922, Robert B. Woodward Memorial Fund, 22.1582. [Creative Commons-BY](#)

Image: front, 22.1582_SL1.jpg. Brooklyn Museum photograph

Catalogue Description: Mask of thin parchment, painted. [Elabora read more...](#)

Record Completeness: **Best (91%)** |

Brooklyn Museum

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Brooklyn, New York 11238-6052

  Eastern Parkway/Brooklyn Museum

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