

Basic Detail Report



00054952

Title

Kisay Dhangal

Date

2016

Primary Maker

Alick Tipoti

Medium

Bronze with mother-of-pearl inlay

Dimensions

Overall: 1940 × 2020 × 1020 mm, 280 kg

Name

Sculpture

History

This piece was created for the Taba Naba Australia, Oceania, Arts of the Sea People which opened in Monaco in March 2016. Torres Strait Islanders have a very close affinity with dhangals and use dhangal fat to produce a number of traditional medicines. The dhangal is also the totem of seven different local tribes. Hunting charms were also made in the shape of a dhangal and symbolises its relationship to the moon and guidance for hunting: "The hunter would carve the back of a wooden dugong charm hollow as if it was a canoe. He would then place ancestral bones and sea grass obtained from the mouth of a previously killed dugong. When the light of the moon shines on the charm, the hunter waiting with his wap (harpoon) whispers a sacred chant that lead the dugong to the nath (hunter's platform). When there is no moon, a different chant acknowledges the phosphorescence created by the dugong when exhaling underwater. The phosphorescence enables hunters to pinpoint the exact position on the dugong where the wap must enter the mammal".