

Basic Detail Report



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Title

Tiwi armband with feather tuft by Margaret Munery

Date

1995

Primary Maker

Margaret Munery

Medium

Pandanus, wax, cockatoo feathers

Dimensions

310 x 135 mm, 0.015 kg

Name

Armband

History

The Tiwi women are traditionally the makers of ceremonial bands. These armbands (pamajini) and headbands (japalingini) have been traditionally worn by mourners during the Pukumani ceremony in conjunction with body paint. The purpose of this disguise is to confuse the spirit of the deceased so it will not be able to recognise the mourners. Purukapali, the ancestral being who gave the Tiwi the Pukumani ceremony at the time of creation, decreed that the Tiwi wear these mourning bands. The Pukumani ceremony is still unique and central to modern Tiwi culture. It involves the placing of burial poles or 'Tutuni' on the deceased's grave along with traditional songs and dances. Tiwi belief is that the first Pukumani ceremony was held by their ancestor Purukuparli for his child, Jinani, and the ceremony was necessary to ensure the deceased entered the spirit world.