

Basic Detail Report



00004428

Title

Model of a Torres Strait canoe

Date

c 1988

Primary Maker

George Crowley

Medium

Wood, bamboo, natural fibres

Dimensions

Overall: 400 × 1080 × 530 mm

Name

Model

History

During the 18th and 19th centuries European maritime navigators travelling through Torres Strait regularly saw outrigger canoes being used by the local population. The Torres Strait islanders extensively interact with their marine world and use canoes for trade, fishing and transport. Dugout canoes are commonly carved from kapok trees and other buoyant woods. In many regions they have pandanus-fibre sails attached to a mast. Canoes can feature single or double outriggers, suitable for long distance travel at sea. On these long journeys the constellations are used for navigation. Canoes and vessels from northern Australia are strikingly more complex than in other regions of the continent. This probably results from their need to be seaworthy during long journeys and the need to negotiate reefs and shallow waters. The presence and interaction of Melanesian vessels with the Islanders may have also generated advancements in boatbuilding technology.