

1075

Ndop Portrait of King Mishe miShyaang maMbul, unknown Kuba artist

Arnold Lehman: This regal-looking sculpture is an *ndop*, an idealized portrait of a deceased Kuba ruler. The severed hand on the front of the drum identifies this *ndop* as King Mishe miShyaang maMbul, who reigned over the Kuba people of the Congo in the late seventeenth century.

William Siegmann: As you see here, the head is way out of proportion to the rest of the body, and the legs are very small in comparison. The important qualities that the artist wanted to represent were in fact the importance of the head, which is the seat of wisdom, the seat of authority, and the seat of personality.

Arnold Lehman: An *ndop* is considered the spirit double of the king, a portrait containing the essence of his leadership. This king is shown in the prime of life, neither too old and infirm nor too young and immature to rule.

One of the oldest pieces in the collection, this is the only wooden *ndop* in the United States and one of only six such pieces in the world. The use of *tukula* powder, a natural insecticide, has helped keep it in extraordinary condition despite its age.