



Date:

1875

Identifier:

T0097

Description:

Thaw Catalog Entry: The use of horse masks was borrowed from the Plains Indians by the Nez Perce and other Plateau tribes rich in horses. Where the Plains Indians made them of skin and usually covered them completely with quill- or beadwork (c.f. fig. XX T70) the Plateau people liked red trade cloth, decorated with blue cloth applique, and some beadwork designs. Typical for horse masks of the Plateau is the decoration with a clutch of feathers on top. On this example this decoration consists of cut and trimmed feathers of the red-shafted flicker, some of them with bits of white ermine fur glued at the tips. A mane of yellow, blue, and purple dyed horse hair is attached along the back. Masked horses were popular at festive occasions in the early years of the 20th century and they are sometimes still to be seen in parades such as at the Pendleton Round Up. These horse masks are often heirlooms dating back to the late 19th century, and their peculiar feather crests suggest a former existence of an associated religious symbolism. Vincent 1995a, fig.45; Katskill Life Vol.10, No.2 Summer 1995, cover.

Physical dimensions:

height 40 in ; length 32 in

Format:

Horse Mask

Coverage:

Idaho ; OR (Oregon) ; Washington State ; Nez Perce ; Cayuse

American Indian Art

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