

Nom : Female figure

Description : One of a distinctive stylistic group of about a dozen sculptures, this figure gives an impression of size and presence. The pose, with arms separated from her sides and hands in front of pelvis, is a symbol of pregnancy, as is the hairstyle. The long lip plug would have been a millet stalk.

Although there is no collection data for this carving, a nearly identical figure has been identified as a display piece brought out for a man's funeral. Another was associated with a shrine to women who died in childbirth and was thought to help restore fertility to supplicants. The frequent cleaning and oiling from these uses give these figures a very different surface from those Dogon objects that receive sacrificial libations.

Female figure, Dogon peoples, Mali, Late 19th to early 20th century, Wood

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Source : Musée national d'art africain