

Nom : Kota Reliquary

Description : Reliquary guardian figure, Kota peoples, Gabon, Late 19th to early 20th century, Wood, brass, copper, bone, iron

A masterwork of abstract, geometric shapes, this stylized human form once guarded ancestral bones preserved in large baskets. While the transverse crest of the coiffure and the large concave face are striking, the most unique feature is the small face on the back. Perhaps the ritual efficacy of the figure was better with two pairs of eyes. Because metal was a precious material, the metal surface on this figure serves as both an offering of wealth and a tangible metaphor for diverting harm.

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Source : Musée national d'art africain