



Nandi's Head, late 18th century; polychromed wood; India

The bull Nandi belongs to the Hindu god Shiva, who uses Nandi as his vehicle of transportation. In this artwork from Kerala in southwestern India, Nandi is presented as a giant wooden head gaily decorated in preparation for a festival. Carved from a single piece of wood, this work was placed at the front of a processional cart drawn through town during temple festivals. Nandi is much loved in Hindu art and religion, and his image is often seen outside temples dedicated to Shiva, adorned with lei.

Nandi's Head

India, Kerala, late 18th century
Polychromed wood

Gift of The Christensen Fund, 2001
(10673.1)

Nandi, the god Shiva's vehicle, is presented here as an oversized head, gaily decorated as if in preparation for a festival. Nandi is much beloved in Hindu art and religion, and is often placed outside Shaivite temples where garlands of flowers are placed around his neck. This work of art was carved from a single piece of wood and was once placed on the processional cart of a south Indian temple.