

Basic Detail Report



Dimensions

Object/Work: 160 x 60 x 45 mm

Figure

Date

1870-1916

Primary Maker

Edward Lovett

Medium

Mandrake root

Description

Figure of a woman holding a child, carved from mandrake root which was said to have curative powers. Mandrakes have long been surrounded by powerful traditions and beliefs in the UK as elsewhere in Europe. Its distinctive form is often said to resemble a human being, and since Biblical times it has been believed to aid with human conception, in addition to possessing many other magical and curative powers. It was believed that it shrieked when pulled out of the ground and either made you mad, brought you bad luck or even killed you. Mandrakes had a reputation as a curative well into the 20th century.

Edward Lovett found it was still familiar to herbalists in the 1920s. He commented: "Today I know several places in London where mandrake can be bought, and I have two or three records of these little figures being fixed to the bed head 'for good luck'. "