



Renée Stout
American, born 1958
Ogun, 1995
wood, metal, and other materials
Ackland Fund, 97.6.1

About the Art

- The description of materials on the label for *Ogun*—wood, metal, and other materials—alludes succinctly to a large number of objects not often associated with works of art. They include car parts, pieces of musical instruments, fragments of dolls, cloth bags, nails, pulleys, tools, text, the motherboard of a computer, and tintype photographs.
- In this work, Renée Stout combines the twentieth-century art technique of assemblage with two African art traditions. Like a Kongo power object, or *nkisi*, *Ogun* is composed of materials appended to a central figure. Moreover, the title and the emphasis on metal materials tie it to Ogun, the Yoruba god of war and metal work.
- This sculpture responds to the constructive use of metal in tools and machines, and to its destructive use, as in the weapons of gang warfare. Stout has described it as a therapeutic means of handling pain, and as an homage to “our male ancestors so that they will give guidance to future generations of young black men.”
- The god Ogun symbolizes strength and protection, and his energy affects machines. Stout feels a family connection to this energy: her grandfathers worked in Pittsburgh steel mills, her father is a mechanic, and she uses power tools herself as a sculptor.

About the Artist

1958: Born in Junction City, Kansas

1980: Graduated from the Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

1985: Moved to Washington D.C.; began making assemblages

1993: Was the first American artist to have a solo exhibition at the National Museum of African Art in Washington, D.C.

1995: Made the Ackland's *Ogun*

2000: Served as artist-in-residence at the Tryon Center for Visual Art (now called McColl Center for Art + Innovation) in Charlotte, North Carolina

2018: Won the Women's Caucus for Art Lifetime Achievement Award