

SIDE GALLERY

RUBEM VALENTIM



Sideboard

Created by Rubem Valentim
Brazil, n.d.
Carved and assembled wood

Measurements

169 cm x 41 cm x 70h cm
66,5 in x 16,1in x 23,6h in

Provenance

Private collection

Edition

Unique Piece

Biography

Rubem Valentim (1922–1991) was a Brazilian artist whose work fused Afro-Brazilian spiritual symbolism with modernist abstraction. Born in Salvador, Bahia, Valentim developed a distinct visual language rooted in Candomblé and Umbanda, translating ritual emblems into geometric compositions. Rejecting both folkloric and formalist conventions, he created a symbolic system that bridges sacred traditions and contemporary design. A key figure in Brazil's mid-20th-century art scene, his work spans painting, sculpture, and architectural reliefs, and is held in major institutions including MoMA, Centre Pompidou, and MASP.

About

This wooden buffet by *Rubem Valentim* embodies the artist's singular approach to form, where spirituality, cultural identity, and modernist abstraction are seamlessly integrated. Constructed from interlocking geometric volumes in carved and assembled wood, the work functions simultaneously as an object of contemplation and a symbolically charged construction.

Created without a title or date, the piece reflects Valentim's broader investigation into a visual language rooted in Afro-Brazilian cosmology—particularly the ritual emblems and symbology of Candomblé. The composition evokes the formality of totemic structures or architectural models, yet resists legibility in favor of coded meaning. Its presence is both grounded and transcendental.

Unlike many of his contemporaries in Brazil's postwar art scene, Valentim did not turn to geometry as a purely formal exercise. Instead, he infused geometric order with ancestral resonance, embedding his work with narratives of resistance, continuity, and belonging. This sculpture exemplifies his commitment to merging the sacred and the constructed—an approach that aligns spiritual practice with modern design sensibility.