

Arrow belt

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Collections / arrow belt



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L'Assomption" style arrow belt with lightning motif, made of 27 corridors. It is made of thick wool in red, yellow, blue, green and white. The colors seem to come from synthetic dyes.

Accession Number 2021.07.04

Date 1939 an

Materials fiber, wool

Technique braided

Measurements 38 x 240 cm

Historical context

This arrow belt is particularly wide and long. In fact, its number of corridors (rows of colors counted from the center) is exceptionally greater than average. This makes this belt a difficult accessory to wear. It is therefore probably a ceremonial piece, made to be displayed. In fact, the wider the belt, the more expensive it is, and the more prestigious it is.

This belt is believed to have come from the personal collection of a Chicoutimi (now Saguenay) notary in the 1930s. Indeed, the intensity of the colors, derived from synthetic dyes, corresponds to this period. Offering diversity and resistance, synthetic dyes emerged in the mid-19th century, gradually replacing natural dyes in the early 20th century. Also, the wools available at this time were less twisted than those used in the 19th century, and therefore thicker, like this one.

Arrow belts, created by French Canadians in the 2nd half of the 18th century, became a cultural symbol in Quebec. Having become essentially folkloric by the turn of the 20th century, conservation and

enhancement initiatives were gradually put in place in the following decades by folklore researchers and a few dart makers.

Arrow belts reflect a multicultural identity. Although difficult to date, they provide us with information on the cultural history of several territories and the socio-economic relationships that bind them together.

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Photo by Louis-Etienne Dore