

Arrow belt

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L'Assomption" style arrow belt, with lightning motif, made of 9 corridors. Its colors seem to come from natural and synthetic dyes.

Accession Number 2021.07.10

Date 1950 an

Materials fiber, wool

Technique braided

Measurements 13,5 x 196 cm

Historical context

This belt is particularly narrow, with only 9 corridors (rows of colors, counted from the center). We can therefore assume that it had more of a utilitarian function, intended to be worn. In fact, the wider the belt, the more prestigious it is. Rooms with a greater number of corridors are more likely to be used as ceremonial objects.

The ever-vibrant hue of its colors makes the belt seem relatively recent. Some of its colors also seem to be derived from synthetic dyes.

Synthetic dyes gradually appeared in the 19th century, replacing natural dyes in the early 20th century. Synthetic dyes are particularly appreciated for their resistance and the diversity of their shades.

Arrow belts, created and worn by French Canadians in the late 18th century, became a cultural symbol in Quebec. After 1880, artisanal production of arrow belts declined. The fur trade, which used handmade belts as an object of exchange with aboriginal peoples, declined. By the early 20th century, they had become essentially folkloric. Folklore researchers and a handful of dart makers gradually set up initiatives to preserve and promote the belts.

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.