

Arrow belt

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Collections / arrow belt



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L'Assomption" style arrow belt with 14 corridors. The sash is made of red, white, blue, yellow and green wool, colored with natural and synthetic dyes. Initials "H" and "C" are embroidered in blue at each end.

Accession Number 2021.07.26

Period 4th quarter of the 19th century

Materials fiber, wool

Technique braided

Measurements 22 x 190 cm

Historical context

A special feature of this arrow belt is the embroidery of two initials. It was probably made to order, the initials corresponding to its owner. This belt reflects the prestige of its wearer. This is evidenced not only by the initials, but also by its size: the longer and wider the belt, the more expensive it is.

The Assomption pattern was gradually established in the early 19th century, with precise patterns and colors, as in the belt shown here. With its colors derived from natural and synthetic dyes, this piece bears witness to the technological context of the late 19th century. This was a period of transition between natural and synthetic dyes.

Arrow belts, created by French Canadians in the 2nd half of the 18th century, became a cultural symbol in Quebec. During the fur trade, native and Métis nations adopted them as symbols of their identity. After 1880, artisanal production of arrow belts declined. Imitations were produced on a large scale in England. Also, the fur trade, which had used handmade belts as an object of exchange with aboriginal

peoples, declined.

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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