

Arrow belt

<https://collections.pacmusee.qc.ca/en/objects/arrow-belt-2021-007-041/>

Collections / arrow belt



CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license

Carnival belt. Made of cotton and multicolored, it was crafted on a loom. A label is sewn on one end.

Accession Number 2021.07.41

Date 2020 an

Materials fiber, wool

Technique woven, machine-made

Measurements 16 x 214 cm

Historical context

This cotton belt was designed for the Carnaval de Québec. Since the 1950s, this event has used arrow belts as symbols of the festivities. This historically rich object, created by French Canadians in the 2nd half of the 18th century, is worn by the Bonhomme Carnaval for two weeks. While the belt worn by this official carnival emblem is a traditional handmade piece, those worn by carnival-goers are often mechanically manufactured in Asia.

Thus, although sold as an arrow belt, the item presented here is not one. Although it contributes to the enhancement of an important cultural and historical heritage, it does not contribute to the visibility of a unique know-how.

Fléché is a hand-braiding technique requiring several hundred hours of work, using wool as the raw material. Similar to the universal herringbone technique, fléché is more sophisticated. The patterns formed can be highly complex, giving arrowed belts great aesthetic and technical qualities. Visually, the belt shown here has no arrowhead, lightning or flame motif. Also, having been machine-made, a thread runs horizontally through the entire weave, a feature not present on handcrafted pieces.

Today, a number of specialists and associations are continuing the tradition of fléché weaving, with a view to passing on historical and traditional knowledge.

Photo by Louis-Etienne Dore