

Arrow belt

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Collections / arrow belt



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

Accession Number 2021.07.46

Date 2008 c

Materials fiber, cotton

Technique woven, machine-made

Measurements 12 x 200 cm

Historical context

This belt was designed to mark the 400th anniversary of Quebec City, celebrated in 2008. The festivities began on December 31, 2007, and were held in several countries around the world, including Europe and the United States.

Since the 1950s, the Carnaval de Québec has used arrow belts as symbols of the festivities. Well-known to festival-goers, these symbolic elements of Quebec culture were produced to mark the city's anniversary, as shown by the label sewn onto this belt.

The carnival arrow belt is inspired by the arrow technique developed by French Canadians in the 2nd half of the 18th century, probably to embellish belts already used to protect themselves from the cold or to support their backs. Gradually, they became an element of identity, nationalism, and then essentially folklore from the 20th century onwards.

Although sold as an arrow belt, the object presented here is not one. Although it contributes to the enhancement of a rich cultural and historical heritage, it does not contribute to the visibility of a unique know-how. Arrow weaving is a manual braiding technique requiring several hundred hours of work, using wool as the raw material.

Today, a number of specialists and associations are keeping this know-how alive, with a view to passing on historical and traditional knowledge.

Photo by Louis-Etienne Dore