

Ethnohistorical collection

Arrow belt

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Collections / arrow belt



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Arrow belt with triple two-tone beaded arrowheads. The belt is made from particularly fine wool in red, green and blue. The colors come from natural dyes. It consists of 3 sewn-together bands. The braiding features a lynx eye.

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Period 2nd quarter of the 19th century

Materials fiber, wool, glass

Technique braided

Historical context

An exceptional piece, this arrowed belt appears to have been made in the first half of the 19th century. The fineness of the wool strands indicates that it was made in the past, as does the use of natural dyes. In this case, the dyes are vegetable, with madder for the red, indigo for the blue and probably horsetail for the green. The belt also features a motif typical of the Patriotes region (Vallée du Richelieu, Quebec), namely three beaded two-tone arrowheads. This suggests that the piece was made around the time of the Patriote events of 1837-1838.


The idea of an antique piece is supported by its structure, since the belt is made up of 3 sewn bands, a feature only found on old braids.

Although it's difficult to pinpoint a specific period, more recent belts with this motif are woven in a single weft.

The braiding is characterized by a lynx eye, an aesthetic joint that reverses the direction of the motifs.

The arrow technique was developed by French Canadians in the second half of the 18th century. Initially symbols of social prestige, belts became identity markers, like this belt, and were later associated with French-Canadian nationalism. Some aboriginal and Métis nations also adopted belts as symbols of identity in the 19th century, and went on to make their own.

Although difficult to date, arrow belts provide us with information on the cultural history of several territories and the socio-economic relationships that bind them together.



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