

Ethnohistorical collection

Arrow belt

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Collections / arrow belt



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Arrow belt with triple two-tone arrowheads framed by an ecru line. The belt is made of red and blue wool. The braiding features a lynx eye. The bangs are made up of braids, themselves divided into several braids. A label mentioning the craftswoman is sewn onto the belt.

Accession Number 2021.15.19

Fabricant / Éditeur Centrale d'Artisanat du Québec

Artiste / Auteur Barot, Cécile

Date 1957 an

Materials fiber, fine wool

Technique braided

Measurements 8,5 x 108 cm

Historical context

This arrow belt was made by Cécile Barot (1903-1957), a well-known Quebec craftswoman. Having learned the art of fléché in Charlevoix, she perfected her technique in Montreal, studying the writings of Quebec anthropologist Marius Barbeau on the subject. Becoming one of the leading defenders of an endangered art, she authored a technical guide to the arrow belt, which was published in one of Barbeau's books. Arrow belts were developed by French Canadians in the latter part of the 18th century. At the turn of the 20th century, they became essentially a folkloric element. Conservation and promotion initiatives were launched by ethnologists, specialists and a few dart makers, including Cécile Barot. Although the public was not very receptive, the practice of darting continued.

Like this arrowed belt, the patterns and colors on Madame Barot's creations differ from those on older or more traditional belts. In fact, the few craftsmen of this period strive to revive this technique by adapting it to contemporary tastes and uses.

Last but not least, this piece boasts two specific features of the craftswoman's braiding. Firstly, the subdivisions of the braids that make

up the bangs, for purely aesthetic purposes, are unique to Cécile Barot. Secondly, she didn't twist her wool: although the braiding is very well done, the strands "distort" in places, revealing the lower layers of wool.

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