

Mukluk

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Pair of adult mukluks with bangs at the top of the calf. The insulating duffle lining inside is decorated on the top edge with red and green thread embroidery.

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Period 20th century

Materials fiber, embroidery thread, fiber, wool, skin, moose

Measurements 45 x 16 x 30 cm

Historical context

In the past, sub-Arctic nations wore moccasins in winter, with upturned flaps fastened with thin leather straps wrapped around the ankle. The leg was covered with a mitasse held below the knee by a garter. The high moccasin, as seen here, is an adaptation influenced by the European boot and the Inuit kamiit, created by assembling the mitasse and the moccasin. The front lacing is another, much later adaptation. The addition of bangs prevents snow from adhering to the shoe through movement. The skins used to make these garments were treated using the “boucanage” (smoking) method, which gives both sides of the leather a suede-like appearance, as well as making them supple and rot-proof.

These shoes are often mistakenly referred to as “mukluk”, an Anglo-American term derived from the Aleut Inuit languages.

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