



Africa:
Egypt, Kenya, Mali, Morocco, Nigeria,
Tanzania, & South Africa

Manitoba Crafts Museum and Library

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Dear Reader,

The document has been prepared to make all the works from the African continent in the Manitoba Crafts Museum and Library collection as accessible as possible to community, and contains information about the cultural objects currently in our care.

The information is accurate to the best of our knowledge as of May 2026.

We acknowledge that some information might be missing or incorrect. We welcome input and additional information from community members.

If you have any comments or questions, or if you would like to add information about any of these works, please contact me at:

204.615.3951 or mcml@c2centreforcrafft.ca

Best,

Andrea Reichert

Curator



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Wall Hanging

Artist: Sayyed Mahmoud

Accession number: 1292.00

Object name: Wall Hanging

Date: July 7, 1980

Period: Late 20th Century



Description: Very colorful and wavy tapestry with 16 cm fringe with abstract design of horses.

History of Use: For centuries, men and women in Upper Egypt have used their inherited knowledge and artistic talent to create textiles both as a family legacy and as a profession. Cotton is primarily used now as it is less expensive than silk and thus more financially rewarding. Handloom weaving is considered a source of identity and pride for the communities. Weaving today (2020s) may not be as lucrative as materials are expensive, and the craft is becoming more neglected. This craft has been inscribed in 2020 on the UNESCO cultural heritage list as in need of urgent safeguarding. This young artist may have been in training by his family as a textile artist.



Narrative: Woven tapestry from Wissa Wissef School. Woven by (boy) Sayyed Mahmoud, Age 9 years.

Material: Wool

Measurements: 39 CM x 43 CM

Culture: Egyptian, North Africa



Statue

Artist: Unknown

Accession number: 1195.00

Object name: Statue

Date: February 1990

Period: Late 20th Century

Description: A carved wooden doll depicting a male figure with long hair, wearing a beaded collar, and an apron decorated with glass beads and cowry shells.

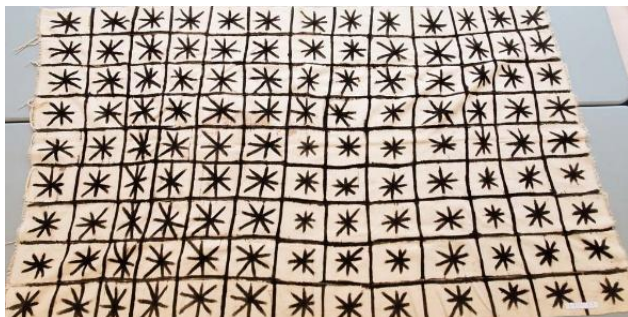
History of Use: Doll originated from the Turkana peoples, a Nilotic (Indigenous) group from Turkana County in northwest Kenya. The donor's account is that the doll was purchased in Kenya in February 1990 from a "Curio vendor" who made the claim that it was made by "the grandmas" (donor's account). The dolls are likely craft items that can be found in Turkana communities but to my knowledge have existed mostly as post-colonial and modern tourist items.

Material: Wood; Beads; Cowrie Shell

Measurements: 17 CM

Culture: Turkana (Kenyan), East Africa





Mud Cloth

Artist: Unknown

Accession number: 3565.00

Object name: Mud Cloth

Period: Late 20th Century

Description: *Bògòlanfini* (Mud cloth).

Traditionally dyed using earth pigments.

Beige/cream body with vertical and horizontal lines creating boxes all throughout body. Each box has an eight point star inside.

History of Use: Probably from Mali, either in D’Jenne or Mopti, made within the Bamana tribal area. Produced entirely by men. Often shipped to western markets during this time period.

Narrative: Cotton base cloth usually made through narrow strip weaving. Individual strips of cloth are woven by men on treadle looms, then sewn together to make a larger textile. It can be worn by married women as a wrap. It can also be worn by men in the form of fitted tunics, caps and pants. *Bogo* means “mud” or “earth”, *lan* is “of” or “with” and *fini* means “cloth”. The process uses river soil, leaves and sunlight, illustrating a connection with the earth as a material resource.

Material: Cotton

Measurements: 187 CM x 108 CM

Culture: Malian, West Africa



Toque:

Artist: Unknown

Accession number: 2104.00

Object names: Toque

Date: 1974

Period: Late 20th Century

Description: Knitted white cap with pom-pom and bow on top. Stitch used makes loops on the outside of the toque. Yellow, blue, green and pink accent colours.

History of Use: from Morocco, 1974. Purchased from child selling home crafted items on street in Tangier.

Narrative: While selling to tourists is likely with this piece, it could be worn as a “kufi” or head covering for men who are Muslim on the cooler days in Morocco.

Material: Wool

Measurements: 20 CM x 22 CM

Culture: Moroccan, North Africa





Tunic

Artist: Unknown

Accession number: 146.01

Object name: Robe

Date: 1920 – circa 1939

Period: Early 20th Century

Description: Chief's ceremonial robe with scoop/V-neck and slits for arms. Both are embroidered with 4 bands and 3 medallions which resemble an endless knot design. Designs on back of neck, tab for hanging inside neck. Hausa style of embroidery. Dyed with Indigo.

1/3 pieces of a full set with 146.02 (pants) and 146.03 (hat). The tunic is known in Yoruba as a “dashiki,” the pants known as “sokoto.” The complete outfit, top, pants and cap is known as “agbada.” Agbada is formal attire. A dashiki alone is informal attire.

Hand weaving (narrow strip loom), sewing, dyeing, embroidery. Designed/made by men. It usually takes more than several people to make this complete outfit.

History of Use: Ceremonial robe set for Yoruba chief. The Yoruba are the largest tribe in Nigeria. The complete outfit (tunic, pants, cap) is in the style of a chief's ceremonial outfit. It would be unusual for a chief to give up one of his ceremonial outfits. It may have been designed for the person who originally brought it to Canada.

Material: Cotton

Measurements: 108 CM x 257 CM

Culture: The Yoruba (Nigeria), West Africa



Pants

Artist: Unknown

Accession number: 146.02

Object name: Pants

Date: 1920 – circa 1939

Period: Early 20th Century

Description: Pair of short wide pants (sokoto) hand dyed with indigo. Solid blue waist. Band 7.7 cm with drawstring. The loose design of the pants and the gown/tunic allows the wearer to be comfortable in the temperature of the area in which he lives.

1/3 pieces of a full set with 146.01 (tunic) and 146.03 (hat). The tunic is known in Yoruba as a “dashiki,” the pants known as “sokoto.” The complete outfit, top, pants and cap is known as “agbada.” Agbada is formal attire. A dashiki alone is informal attire.

Hand weaving (narrow strip loom), sewing, dyeing, embroidery. Designed/made by men. It usually takes more than several people to make this complete outfit.

History of Use: Ceremonial robe set for Yoruba chief. The Yoruba are the largest tribe in Nigeria. The complete outfit (tunic, pants, cap) is in the style of a chief’s ceremonial outfit. It would be unusual for a chief to give up one of his ceremonial outfits. It may have been designed for the person who originally brought it to Canada.

Material: Cotton

Measurements: 83.5 CM x 106 CM

Culture: The Yoruba (Nigeria), West Africa



Hat

Artist: Unknown

Accession number: 146.03

Object name: Hat

Date: 1920 – circa 1939

Period: Early 20th Century

Description: Cotton hat, known as a "fila" "aso oke hat" in Yoruba, with round top and points on two sides. Dyed with Indigo.

1/3 pieces of a full set with 146.01 (tunic) and 146.02 (pants). The tunic is known in Yoruba as a "dashiki," the pants known as "sokoto." The complete outfit, top, pants and cap is known as "agbada." Agbada is formal attire. A dashiki alone is informal attire.

Hand weaving (narrow strip loom), sewing, dyeing, embroidery. Designed/made by men. It usually takes more than several people to make this complete outfit.

History of Use: Ceremonial robe set for Yoruba chief. The Yoruba are the largest tribe in Nigeria. The complete outfit (tunic, pants, cap) is in the style of a chief's ceremonial outfit. It would be unusual for a chief to give up one of his ceremonial outfits. It may have been designed for the person who originally brought it to Canada.

Material: Cotton

Measurements: 40 CM x 31 CM

Culture: The Yoruba (Nigeria), West Africa





Tunic

Artist: Unknown

Accession number: 1536.00

Object name: Shirt

Period: Late 20th Century

Description: Cream coloured, sleeveless, long men's tunic.

History of Use: Herders tunic made of cotton

Narrative: There is a possibility that this tunic is from the Fulani ethnic group in Nigeria. Reason being that the Fulani people have traditionally been a nomadic ethnic group and herders. Additionally, many vintage photographs of the Fulani show the men wearing tunics such as these. Fulani or Fula are one of the largest ethnic groups in West Africa. In Nigeria, they tend to be in the middle central/northern districts. Fulani are Islamic. The tunics vary in length and colour, although the shorter cream-coloured ones are the traditional style and colour.

Material: Cotton

Measurements: 84 CM x 54 CM

Culture: The Fulani (Nigeria), West Africa





Drop Spindle

Artist: Unknown

Accession number: 1532.00

Object name: Spindle

Period: Late 20th Century

Description: Grey spindle whorl on wood spindle. Made of wood by a Nigerian Artist. Spun cotton on spindle.



Marks/Label: Spindle whorl has incised pattern.

History of Use: From northern Nigeria. The northern area of Nigeria is predominantly Hausa/Fulani territory, with some Fulani tribal areas made up of sub tribal areas around the major centres such as Katsina, Sokoto, Jos, and Kano which was the end of the traditional trade route across the desert. The textile production area is large and productive so the traditional use of spindles such as these were used extensively.

Material: Wood; Clay

Measurements: 28 CM

Culture: Nigeria, West Africa





Drop Spindle

Artist: Unknown

Accession number: 1533.00

Object name: Spindle

Period: Late 20th Century

Description: Grey incised clay spindle whorl on wood spindle.

History of Use: Northern Nigeria from the Hausa area.

Material: Wood; Clay

Measurements: 28 CM

Culture: Nigeria, West Africa





Drop Spindle

Artist: Unknown

Accession number: 1534.00

Object name: Spindle

Period: Late 20th Century

Description: Drop spindle with clay whorl and wood spindle. Made by a Nigerian Artist.

History of Use: Northern Nigeria from the Hausa Region.

Material: Wood; Clay

Measurements: 24 CM

Culture: Nigeria, West Africa





Stool

Artist: Unknown

Accession number: 3532.00

Object name: Stool

Period: Mid 20th Century

Description: Three legged dark wood stool.

History of Use: Created in Tanzania, possibly the Kwere tribal area in eastern Tanzania. It is similar in many ways in design (leg details and basic shape) to a stool by a Kwere artist in the Smithsonian Museum of African Art # 94-10-1.

Narrative: Stools were traditionally associated with the leadership of a tribe or lineage, and leaders were usually placed upon a stool as the final rite of leadership. The higher ranked in the community, the more decorated or elaborate the stool. This rite is called an enstoolment in African countries. This stool is carved from one piece of wood. It is likely the centre of the stool was the centre ring of the tree it was carved from, as is traditional.

Material: Wood

Measurements: 32 CM x 52 CM

Culture: Tanzanian, East Africa





Necklace

Artist: Unknown

Accession number: 1609.00

Object name: Necklace

Period: Late 20th Century

Description: Eleven strands of blue glass seed beads and two strands of blue plastic beads joined at each end to a beaded loop, one of which has a beaded ball to catch in the other loop. Made by Zulu women.

Narrative: It is likely that this necklace was made with the intention of selling to tourists who visit Zulu communities. Similar necklaces have also been worn by members of the Zulu community. The glass beads are made in the Czech Republic.

Material: Glass Beads; Plastic Beads

Measurements: 52 CM

Culture: Zulu, South Africa





Necklace

Accession number: 1691.00

Object name: Necklace

Period: Late 20th Century

Description: Beads worked over a cord. Closure is a larger bead covered with red glass beads held by a loop of beads on other end of the strand. Alternating segments of colour are separated by zig zag pattern of black beads.

Narrative: Beaded Zulu necklaces and other beaded adornments have historically been a way of communicating various things such as marital status, gender and to express certain feelings. For example, when colour coding, whenever the red is beaded next to black, it signifies an aching heart. In the past, communicating through beaded jewelry with various adornments was something that was not accessible to everyone and it indicated your higher social status if you held many pieces of jewelry.

Considering the fact that the donor was not from the Zulu tribe, this specific necklace was most likely made for tourists to purchase by the Zulu vendor.

Material: Glass; Cord

Measurements: 44 CM

Culture: Zulu, South Africa

