



**Central & South America:
Ecuador, Guatemala, Panama & Chile**

Manitoba Crafts Museum and Library

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Dear Reader,

The document has been prepared to make all the works from the Central and South America regions 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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Spindle Whorl

Artist: Unknown

Accession number: 730.00

Object name: Spindle Whorl

Period: Undetermined

Description: Spindle whorl with incised pattern. Ceramic. 4 other matching whorls (1528, 1529, 1530, 1531) from Ecuador.

History of Use: The humid climate of Ecuador has destroyed most direct evidence of textile manufacture from sites older than about 1000 years of age. Apart from copper and bone needles, the best indication we have of textile production has been the presence of ceramic spindle whorls, used in hand spinning cotton. Textiles were produced in abundance and exported, and small exquisitely decorated whorls are among the most common artifacts recovered from village sites. The whorls were decorated by excision in repeated patterns of animals, birds, fish, lizards, geometric designs and even hunting and dancing scenes.

Material: Clay

Measurements: 3.5 CM

Culture: Ecuadorean, Central America



Spindle Whorl

Artist: Unknown

Accession number: 1528.00

Object name: Spindle Whorl

Period: Undetermined

Description: Incised pattern with bird figure. 4 other matching whorls (730, 1529, 1530, 1531) from Ecuador.

History of Use: The humid climate of Ecuador has destroyed most direct evidence of textile manufacture from sites older than about 1000 years of age. Apart from copper and bone needles, the best indication we have of textile production has been the presence of ceramic spindle whorls, used in hand spinning cotton. Textiles were produced in abundance and exported, and small exquisitely decorated whorls are among the most common artifacts recovered from village sites. The whorls were decorated by excision in repeated patterns of animals, birds, fish, lizards, geometric designs and even hunting and dancing scenes.

Material: Clay

Measurements: 1.3 CM

Culture: Ecuadorean, Central America





Spindle Whorl

Artist: Unknown

Accession number: 1529.00

Object name: Spindle Whorl

Period: Undetermined

Description: Incised pattern with bird figure; barrel shaped. 4 other matching whorls (730, 1528, 1530, 1531) from Ecuador.

History of Use: The humid climate of Ecuador has destroyed most direct evidence of textile manufacture from sites older than about 1000 years of age. Apart from copper and bone needles, the best indication we have of textile production has been the presence of ceramic spindle whorls, used in hand spinning cotton. Textiles were produced in abundance and exported, and small exquisitely decorated whorls are among the most common artifacts recovered from village sites. The whorls were decorated by excision in repeated patterns of animals, birds, fish, lizards, geometric designs and even hunting and dancing scenes.

Material: Clay

Measurements: 1.5 CM

Culture: Ecuadorean, Central America



Spindle Whorl

Artist: Unknown

Accession number: 1530.00

Object name: Spindle Whorl

Period: Undetermined

Description: Incised pattern with bird figure; cone shaped. 4 other matching whorls (730, 1528, 1529, 1531) from Ecuador.

History of Use: The humid climate of Ecuador has destroyed most direct evidence of textile manufacture from sites older than about 1000 years of age. Apart from copper and bone needles, the best indication we have of textile production has been the presence of ceramic spindle whorls, used in hand spinning cotton. Textiles were produced in abundance and exported, and small exquisitely decorated whorls are among the most common artifacts recovered from village sites. The whorls were decorated by excision in repeated patterns of animals, birds, fish, lizards, geometric designs and even hunting and dancing scenes.

Material: Clay

Measurements: 1.0 CM

Culture: Ecuadorean, Central America



Spindle Whorl

Artist: Unknown

Accession number: 1531.00

Object name: Spindle Whorl

Period: Undetermined

Description: Incised pattern with bird figure; cone shaped. 4 other matching whorls (730, 1528, 1529, 1530) from Ecuador.

History of Use: The humid climate of Ecuador has destroyed most direct evidence of textile manufacture from sites older than about 1000 years of age. Apart from copper and bone needles, the best indication we have of textile production has been the presence of ceramic spindle whorls, used in hand spinning cotton. Textiles were produced in abundance and exported, and small exquisitely decorated whorls are among the most common artifacts recovered from village sites. The whorls were decorated by excision in repeated patterns of animals, birds, fish, lizards, geometric designs and even hunting and dancing scenes.

Material: Clay

Measurements: 1.5 CM

Culture: Ecuadorean, Central America



Drop Spindle

Artist: Unknown

Accession number: 1403.00

Object name: Spindle

Date: 1990 – 1993

Period: Late 20th Century

Description: Carved stick with vestiges of brown stained bands along its length. Clay whorl is roughly formed, with brown stained bands around it. Orangey-brown fibers spun into yarn on the spindle. Spun with the tip on the floor or in a dish. Also known as a supported spindle. Used for cotton or other short fibres around the world.

History of Use: Probably made by husband of weaver/spinner. Made in 1990's. Used by Mayan women in the Highlands of Guatemala. It was made in Lake Atitlan - Sololá Area, Guatemala.

Material: Wood; Fibre; Clay

Measurements: 42 CM

Culture: Guatemalan, Central America



Skirt

Artist: Unknown

Accession number: 2114.00

Object name: Skirt

Period: Late 20th Century

Description: 3 panel skirt, machine sewn together, only upper edge is finished. Multi-coloured portion 15 CM from hem and 30 CM wide on blue background, 2 ties not attached. An unfinished slash (2.5 CM) near waist. Appears to be a traditional wrap skirt.

History of Use: purchased by donor in Chinicastenango, Guatemala in 1976 at the local market. Purchased directly from the woman who wove it.

Material: Rayon; Metallic Threads

Measurements: 96.5 CM x 145 CM

Culture: Guatemalan, Central America





Doll

Artist: Unknown

Accession number: 3189.00 – 3189.03

Object name: Doll

Date: 1978

Period: Late 20th Century

Description: Four dolls. All of their limbs are made of rolled paper, with stuffed bodies and heads covered in fabrics and showing stitched features. 3189.00 Is dressed in national garb, multi-coloured skirt with knitted top in multi-colours, hair is rolled around her head and covered with a kerchief. She wears a basket on top of her head with grasses attached. 3189.01 Wears the national outfit of the day that comprises of skirt and top of multi-colours. She carries an infant on her back. Her hair is wound around her head and covered with a kerchief. She carries a basket of fruit on her head. 3189.02 Is dressed in green and black pants with a yellow sash and a red striped shirt. His head is covered in a red bandana and he has a reed pack on his back. 3189.03 is dressed in yellow pants with a red sash and gold and black woven shirt. He has a red bandana on his head and carries a reed pack.

History of Use: "gift from a friend - purchased in a market" note from donor.

Material: Cotton; Paper; Wood; Grass

Measurements: 6.7 CM x 17 CM

Culture: Guatemalan, Central America



Mola

Artist: Unknown

Accession number: 821.00

Object name: Mola

Period: Mid 20th Century; Late 20th Century

Description: Mola. Hand sewn. Abstract bird design. This was a panel on a cape. The Kuna people are Indigenous inhabitants of small areas of Panama and Colombia, particularly a group of islands off the coast known as the San Blas Islands. A mola is one piece of a traditional blouse-like garment.

History of Use: Sample of mola quilting from the San Blas Islands. A mola is a decorated cotton panel embroidered, appliqued, and perforated to show underlying colours. Kuna women sew two separate molas & then form a blouse by adding shoulder pieces & short sleeves. Most women wear the mola together with a wraparound skirt of printed fabric.

Material: Cotton

Measurements: 43 CM x 33 CM

Culture: Kuna (Panamanian), Central America





Arpillera

Artist: Unknown

Accession number: 1291.00

Object name: Arpillera

Period: Late 20th Century

Description: Fabric picture, applique and embroidery. Figures (3) raised from base fabric. Scene: mountains, sun, houses, women working. Blanket stitch around edge. Other parts of set have culture listed as Chilean. Function listed on index card is "political protest".



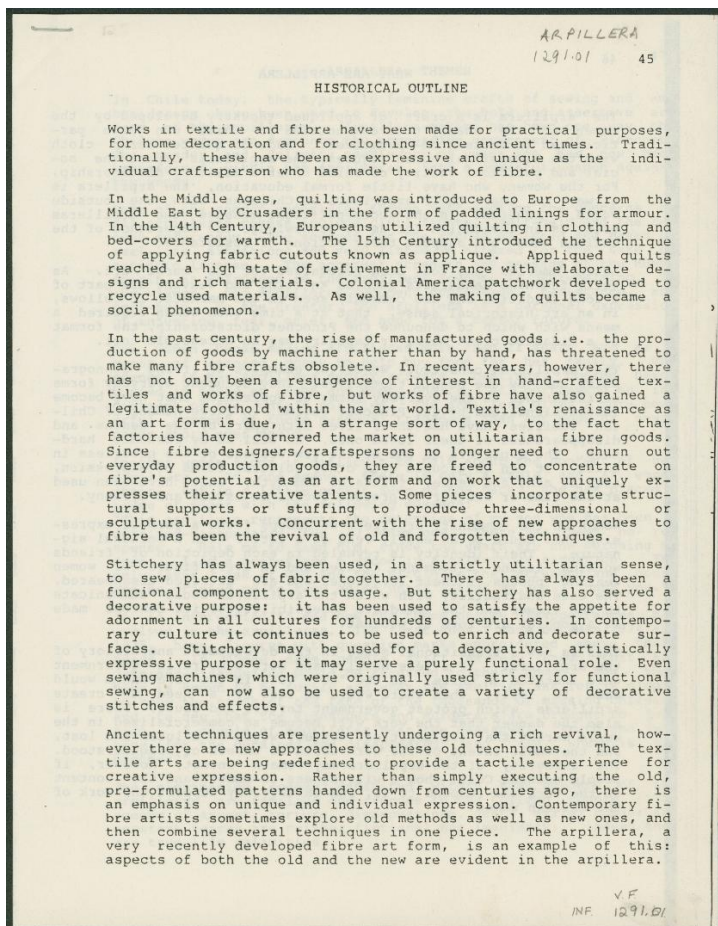
Narrative: The art form of arpilleras became widely popularized in the 1970s during the totalitarian military regime. Women especially used the art form of arpillera to express themselves and grieve. Arpilleras were often smuggled out of the country and distributed to other countries to spread awareness about what was going on in Chile at the time, as well as for profit. Most arpilleras made during that time were unsinged by the artists to avoid being caught by the government.

Material: Cotton

Measurements: 21.4 CM x 20.7 CM

Culture: Chilean, South America





Article

Author: Unknown

Accession number: 1291.01

Object name: Article

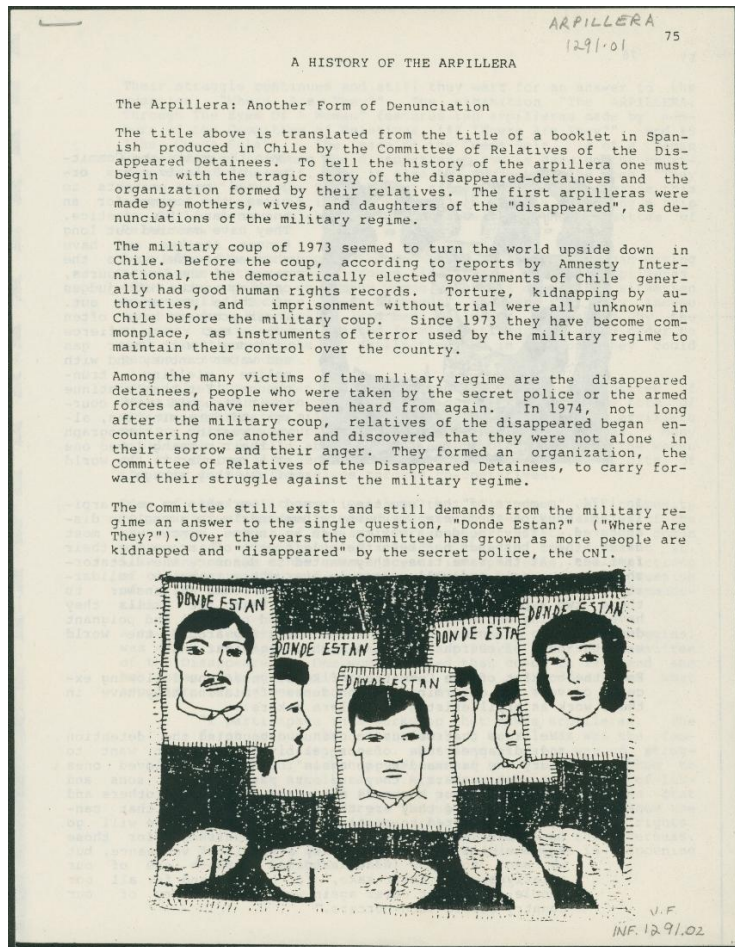
Period: Late 20th Century

Description: Photocopied pages 45-50, excerpted from a larger work (CUSO). Discusses history, themes, and characteristics of arpillera (a textile art made by Chilean women during the Pinochet regime, often as a form of political protest). Appears to have been written during Pinochet's military regime (1973-1990). Accompanies arpillera piece 1291.00.

Material: Paper

Measurements: 21.5 CM x 28 CM

Culture: Chilean, South America



Article

Author: Unknown

Accession number: 1291.02

Object name: Article

Period: Late 20th Century

Description: Photocopied pages 75-77, excerpted from a larger work (CUSO). Discusses the history of arpillera (a textile art made by Chilean women during the Pinochet regime, often as a form of political protest). Two black and white illustrations of arpillera pieces. Appears to have been written during Pinochet's military regime (1973-1990). Accompanies arpillera piece 1291.00.

Material: Paper

Measurements: 21.5 CM x 28 CM

Culture: Chilean, South America



Doll

Artist: Unknown

Accession number: 1959.00

Object name: Doll

Date: 1938

Period: Early 20th Century

Description: Doll with red felt skirt and shawl with felt floral applique (black, yellow, purple). Multi-colour wool fringe on shawl. Purple and yellow felt trim on bottom of skirt, cream brocade jacket with cream and red cotton bobbin lace edging around sleeves, bottom and up front and around collar. Black hair, metal hoop earring on right ear. Beige, green and purple linen scarf around head with leaf pattern. Basket filled with felt stuffed fruit resting at an angle from right side of head. Painted eyes and lips. Black felt shoes with wooden soles. Right arm missing. Linen bloomers.

Material: Felt; Rayon?; Linen; Basket; Metal; Wool

Measurements: 15 CM x 34 CM

Culture: Undetermined, South America

