

POINTE-À-CALLIÈRE

Exhibition
Until March 12, 2023

Headdresses from around the World

The Antoine de
Galbert Collection

Discover
more than 300
headdresses



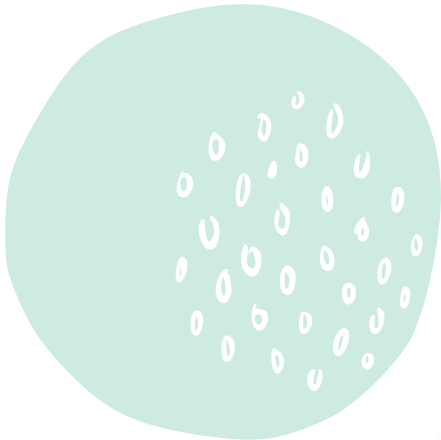
Affirming an identity

The clothing people choose to wear rarely springs solely from their own personal taste, but rather emerges from a collective development. Headgear often displays group emblems and may, in certain situations, have a political significance, conveying a message of resistance or a silent manifesto.

► Worn by Akha women, these colourful headdresses convey precise information about their ethnic identity, village of origin, and lineage through highly codified decoration. The little white grains known as “Job’s tears” are symbols of fertility and wealth.



MARRIED WOMAN'S HEADDRESS
20th century
Asia, Northern Thailand;
Akha (Hani) people
Plant fibres, cotton, silver alloy,
Job's tears seeds, beads, bones
(water buffalo)



HAT
Late 19th century
North America, Canada, British
Columbia, Haida Gwaii archipelago;
Haida Nation
Split spruce root, pigments

▲ A symbol of cultural identity among the Haida people, this type of hat is worn during ceremonies and official meetings. Women braid them, while men paint them with the emblems of the families who commissioned them.

Headdresses from around the World

The Antoine de Galbert Collection

Pointe-à-Callière, Montréal's archaeology and history complex, presents an exclusive North American exhibition of philanthropist Antoine de Galbert's remarkable collection, featuring some 300 exceptionally beautiful headdresses, which he donated to the Musée des Confluences in Lyon (France) in 2017. Collected in Africa, Asia, Oceania, and the Americas, the headwear and finery on display serves to introduce us to those whose heads it adorned. A true window onto the world's incredible cultural diversity, the exhibition reminds us of the many reasons why humans have covered their heads down through the millennia.

PROTECTIVE OR RITUAL HAT,
TANGGOI
Early 20th century
Asia, Indonesia or Malaysia,
island of Borneo; Dayak people
Plant fibres, beads



Physical and Symbolic Protection

As part of daily life, headgear serves many practical functions, such as protecting the head from the sun and the elements. It can also provide a form of protection against invisible forces.

▲ Dayak hats, worn while carrying out agricultural work, became markers of prestige. Decorated with beads, these ritual objects were passed down from generation to generation.



PHOENIX DIADEM, *FENG GUAN*
Second half of the 20th century
Asia, China, Guizhou province,
Kaili county-level city; Miao people,
Kra Nong group
Silver alloy

◀ Adorned with phoenixes, lyrebirds, good luck flowers, and repellent leaves, this headdress with mythological motifs protects the wearer from forces of evil.

Head of state

A headdress is a manifestation of power, as well as a means of strengthening it. Crafted of rare and costly materials, it serves to identify the wearer as an indisputable leader. Bearing motifs invested with supernatural powers, it establishes a link with the invisible realm, or with ancestors, and legitimizes power.



CHIEF'S HEADDRESS, MISANGO MAYAKA

Second half of the 20th century
Africa, Democratic Republic of Congo,
province of Kwango, Kwilu, and Kasai;
Pende, Yaka, Suku, Chokwe,
and Lunda people
Plant fibres, glass beads, wood



COURT HEADDRESS, KEN'EI-KAN-TYPE KANMURI

20th century
Asia, Japan
*Bamboo, lacquered silk gauze,
hair (or horsehair), silk*

Till death do us part

Whether modest or dazzling in appearance, bridal ornaments carry symbols of prosperity and fertility. They allow brides to take on their roles under auspicious circumstances and represent the alliance between two families.

► In West Bengal, the *topor*, made of a white, spongy plant substance, is offered as a gift from the bride's family to the future groom to foster the couple's happiness.

Ritual to performance

Often accompanied by dances, ritual ceremonies mark the passing of seasons and highlight major life events. Today, certain rituals have become performances or tourist attractions. For the headdresses used on these occasions, this is often an opportunity to begin a second life.



MAN'S MARRIAGE
HEADRESS, *TOPOR*
Early 21st century
Asia, India, State of West Bengal
Sholapith



DIANCUI SHIPIN
HEAD ORNAMENTS
Late Qing dynasty (1644-1911)
Asia, China
*Papier mâché, brass,
kingfisher feathers*

A Thousand and One Influences

As well as reflecting a community's tastes and needs at a specific time in its history, headdresses are influenced by external factors. This intermingling demonstrates the appeal of novelty while also bearing witness to Western expansion in the contemporary era and the globalization of trade, religious missions, migration, conquests, and colonization.

► With its blending of styles, this ray-shaped hat is inspired by German navy caps, borrowing both their general shape and the pattern of German imperial cockades.



RAY-SHAPED DANCE CAP
20th century
Oceania, Papua New Guinea,
New Britain, Gazelle Peninsula;
Gunantuna (Tolai) people
Wood, textile, shells, leaves,
pigments, paper



HEADDRESS
20th century
South America, Brazil, Upper Xingu
region; (possibly) Kamayurá people
Scarlet, blue, and hyacinth macaw
feathers, plant fibres

Feathers Speak Volumes

In South America, feathers are a colourful means of expression. Each population has its own finery, which can be adapted in an infinite number of ways—thanks to the wide variety of feathers available from the local fauna—and whose ornamentation conveys the complexities of social organization.

Antoine de Galbert, an eclectic and insatiable collector

Antoine de Galbert, founder of *La Maison rouge*—a Parisian art centre—is passionate about contemporary art. Having taken an interest in the way in which humans cover their heads, he collected over 500 headdresses over some 30 years of research. At first, colours, materials, and shapes guided his choices. But, both through its documentary and aesthetic qualities, the collection reveals a world filled with stories and various cultural approaches. He donated his collection to the Musée des Confluences in 2017 so that it could be shown to the public.

"As I contemplate my collection of headdresses, I feel the sense of elation that comes with travelling the world—completing something much like a stationary journey, an inner and mental expedition like one we sometimes take ensconced in our bed. This collection reflects a certain form of romanticism sustained by travellers' tales."

— Antoine de Galbert



Antoine de Galbert with a Pende headdress that once belonged to the artist Arman
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Montréal Archaeology
and History Complex

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