

Basic Detail Report



Tapa Cloth

Date

mid 19th - early 20th Century

Medium

Bark and pigment

Description

Tapa cloths are made in various parts of the Pacific as well as the world. They are made of the beaten and flattened bark of trees rather than from animal fibers or other natural materials. Pacific tapa cloths are known by different names depending on where they were made. Although the techniques for making tapa differ regionally, they are generally constructed by a woman or group of women. Tree bark is removed and the bast is separated

out from the bark. This bast is scraped and beaten and eventually becomes long strips of fiber. These strips are joined together to make sections of cloth. The cloth is then decorated with traditional and local imagery. The methods used to add designs to the tapa also vary, but generally speaking, two popular methods are to hand paint designs and to transfer designs onto the cloth from a design tablet.

Dimensions

105 × 91 in. (266.7 × 231.1 cm)