



Shield

Date

early 20th Century

Primary Maker

Oromo

Medium

Leather and wood

Description

Despite the only other example found of this shield attributed to the Amhara, this shield was mostly likely used by the Oromo or other neighboring people of south-central Ethiopia. Though nothing is written about leaf-shaped shields of Ethiopian regional groups other than the Konso, this is clearly made in the traditional Oromo style. Craftsmen called chawa in Oromo cut hippopotamus hide to shape, place it on a wooden mold, oil it as it is pounded and stretched into its unique shape, and dry it. A thick leather handle was rolled and secured to the back using

four holes corresponding to four small protrusions on the front. The shape as well as the size of this shield indicate that this is a dance shield.

Dimensions

23 1/2 × 11 1/4 × 4 in. (59.7 × 28.6 × 10.2 cm)