



## Shield

**Date**

early to mid 20th Century

**Primary Maker**

Konso

**Medium**

Leather, fiber and pigment

**Description**

The Konso from south-central Ethiopia share much in common with the Oromo and other regional groups. Known predominantly for their impressive terrace farming, not much is to be said of their warfare. What is known is that the only shield characteristically attributed to them takes the form of a leaf. The hide shields are made in much the same molded method as other south-Ethiopian examples. They are placed on a mold as they are dried, creating complex shapes. Generally, these shields are made from a single piece of leather, but this

example appears to have strips attached to embellish the curves of the leaf shape. As opposed to the darkening we often see in the leather shields of this area, Konso shields were instead bleached giving them their lighter color. We can also see the vague remnants of paint as well as complex symmetrical patterns of stippled dots and lines. These shields were used for wars and ceremonies. Considering the small size of this shield it is likeliest that it was used for funerary rites.

**Dimensions**

21 1/2 × 6 1/2 × 4 in. (54.6 × 16.5 × 10.2 cm)