

Basic Detail Report



Headrest

Date

early 20th Century

Primary Maker

Dinka

Medium

Wood, metal and fiber

Description

Headrests produced by the Dinka of South Sudan primarily depicted cattle, as seen here, which were intrinsic to the Dinka way of life. As with much of sub-Saharan eastern Africa, the headrest is not imbued with any particular spiritual meaning, but it does play the usual role in keeping one's head off of the ground while sleeping and protecting one's coiffure. An elaborate hairstyle was seen as a status symbol. Specifically, amongst the Dinka tribal elders also used headrests as stools as it was considered poor form to sit on the floor. Throughout Africa, headrests are often supplemented with metal, either by inlay or by methods like fitting shell casings over wooden protrusions.

Dimensions

6 3/4 × 25 1/2 × 3 1/2 in. (17.1 × 64.8 × 8.9 cm)