



Headrest

Date
20th Century

Primary Maker
Karamojong

Medium
Wood and metal

Description

A member of the Karamojong culture, a Nilotic group living in northeast Uganda, made this headrest sometime in the 20th Century. Headrests are commonly used throughout Africa to help protect intricate coiffures while resting, though in many cases they carry with them a certain degree of spiritual meaning or prestige. At least in certain instances, it was noted that Karamojong headrests hold special magical powers of guidance and the ability to commune with the community’s ancestors. Like many of the groups of the greater region, the Karamojong are primarily livestock herders and the prevalence of this profession among the Karamojong has permeated many facets of their culture. These tall, narrow headrests are designed to be precarious to keep the user from falling into a deep sleep and losing track of their herd.

Dimensions
7 3/4 × 15 × 3 1/4 in. (19.7 × 38.1 × 8.3 cm)