



Headrest

Date

20th Century

Primary Maker

Gurage

Medium

Wood

Description

This is a wooden headrest made by the Gurage culture of Ethiopia during the 20th Century. Rather than being imbued with spiritual significance, the headrests of many eastern African countries carried utilitarian and prestige functions. This type of conical headrest was used by men. Headrests were introduced to Ethiopia some 300 years ago. At the time, it was the southernmost country in Africa to use the wood lathe, and the distinctive rivets of its manufacturing process can be seen here. Interestingly, several Ethiopian headrest designs share similarities with headrests made by Egyptians up to 4500 years ago.

Dimensions

6 1/2 × 6 1/8 × 3 7/8 in. (16.5 × 15.6 × 9.8 cm)