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Patterns Around the World: Japanese, Maori, Islamic, Aztec/ Mayan, African

Catherine French

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Class Title: Patterns Around the World (10 Sessions)

~ Japanese ~ Maori ~ Islamic ~ Aztec/Mayan ~ African ~

Date: 04/16/2017

Site: CIM 9am-12pm

Teaching Artist: Catherine French

This is a:

Revision to Current Class

Overview of class

This course is for all levels of artists; from beginning to advance. It focuses on five different cultures from around the world, giving each culture approximately two class periods to learn and experiment with. However, based on participant feedback, the cultures listed do not have to be the cultures taught if there is a high demand to create and learn about art from a different culture. In this course, there will be a diverse amount of materials that participants will get to use, including paint, watercolor, collage, and printmaking.

Essential Question/ Theme

How do patterns and symbols enhance a cultures art? What makes them art?

Student learning outcomes

- **Technical:** Participants will gain hands on experience in a variety of media throughout the mini projects as well as the final projects. We will discuss how to use the different types of paints, how to use the ink in printmaking, as well as how to create art inspired by other cultures.
- **Creativity/ Imagination:** Participants will have the opportunity to expand their mind and create meaningful pieces of work inspired by their own likes, thoughts, and heritage. They will have the space to create art that is unique to them and their own style.
- **Cultural/ Historical:** Each week, we will have art history pertaining to a particular culture to one extent or another. We will discuss topics such as a culture's symbolism, patterns

within their clothing, architecture, and art, as well as some geographical information about that culture.

- Reflection/ Critique: Every other week, after participants have had a chance to create a piece of art based on a specific culture, we will have a reflection. This will give each participant time to talk about their work, and to discuss each other's work, in a respectable, constructive manner.

Goals

- Throughout discussion and handouts, participants will gain more knowledge about the five different cultures in this course, including but not limited to: their geography, their history, what types of patterns they used and why they are important, and what types of symbolisms they used and what it meant to them.
- Participants will have the basic knowledge about different forms of art and how to use them such as painting, 2-D art, paper art, and printmaking.
- Participants will know more about how to incorporate both themselves and other cultures in order to create one cohesive art piece.
- Through reflection, participants will gain more insight about themselves and their peers, and learn more about how to discuss art.

Materials

Pencils	Colored pencils
Markers	Glue sticks
Magazines	Acrylic paint
Watercolor paint	Brushes
Palettes	Brayers
Plexi glass	Water-based ink
Mixed media paper	Construction paper

Course Outline

Japanese

Day 1: Introduce Culture/ Sketch Idea

9:00-9:45 Introduce culture and various patterns (Japanese ceramic/clothing/architecture/symbolism)

9:45-11:15 Drawing activity: practice picking different patterns and design own origami kimono

11:15-11:45 Sketch ideas/ draw final piece for the culture (check-in with participants)

11:45-12:00 Clean up

Day 2: Review/ Paint/ Reflection

9:00-9:30 Review last week's culture, discuss paintings and lampwork

9:30-11:00 Paint final piece (check-in with participants) Participants will choose 4 different Japanese patterns and add color using watercolor, colored pencils, and marker on 4 pieces of pre-hole punched paper, then using yarn they will connect the papers to make a hanging square lantern

11:00-11:15 Clean up

11:15- 12:00 Class reflection (5 minutes each) facilitated by teachers



Maori

Day 3: Introduce Culture/ Sketch Idea

9:00-9:45 Introduce culture and various patterns, introduction to Maori history and the symbols that they used

9:45-11:15. Participants will all be give a copy of a Maori design in which they will use color to make it uniquely their own

11:15-11:45 Sketch ideas/ draw final piece for the culture (check-in with participants)

11:45-12:00 Clean up

Day 4: Review/ Paint/ Reflection

9:00-9:30 Review last week's culture, discuss color and symbolism

9:30-11:00 final piece (check-in with participants) Participants will use either the construction paper (to focus on color again) or paint (to focus more on symbolism) to create a piece inspired by Maori culture

11:00-11:15 Clean up

11:15- 12:00 Class reflection (5 minutes each) facilitated by teachers



Islamic

Day 5: Introduce Culture/ Sketch Idea

9:00-9:45 Introduce culture and various patterns (Islamic history, beliefs, and symbols)

9:45-11:15 Participants will create a piece inspired by one of the three Islamic patterns art forms: arabesque, geometric, or calligraphy

11:15-11:45 Sketch ideas/ draw final piece for the culture (check-in with participants)

11:45-12:00 Clean up

Day 6: Review/ Paint/ Reflection

9:00-9:30 Review last week's culture, discuss mosaics

9:30-11:00 final piece (check-in with participants) Participants will create a mosaic after drawing out an image and filling it with cut up pieces of magazines

11:00-11:15 Clean up

11:15- 12:00 Class reflection (5 minutes each) facilitated by teachers



Aztec/Maya

Day 7: Introduce Culture/ Sketch Idea

9:00-9:45 Introduce fundamentals of Aztec (art and poetry) and Maya (carvings and murals) culture, as well as their calendars

9:45-11:15 Drawing activity to practice patterns of choice, creating a design combining Aztec and Mayan symbolism

11:15-11:45 Sketch ideas/ draw final piece for the culture (check-in with participants)

11:45-12:00 Clean up

Day 8: Review/ Paint/ Reflection

9:00-9:30 Review last week's culture, discuss calendar and mandalas

9:30-11:00 Paint final piece (check-in with participants) Participants will create a mandala inspired by the Aztec and Maya calendars. They will be creating and incorporating their own symbols inside the mandala and do a writing piece in addition to it. In the writing piece, participants will answer:

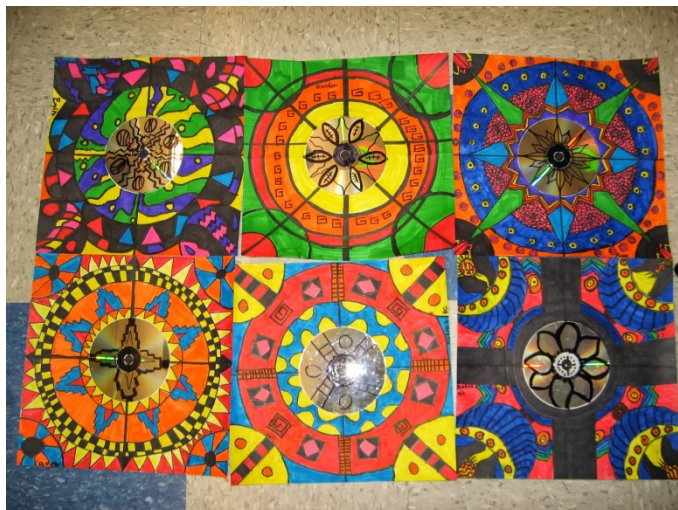
What do your symbols/patterns mean to you? What do they represent?

How did your use of color emphasize the meaning behind you mandala?

Why do you think mandalas are important in a variety of cultures?

11:00-11:15 Clean up

11:15- 12:00 Class reflection (5 minutes each) facilitated by teachers



African

Day 9: Introduce Culture/ Sketch Idea

9:00-9:45 Introduce African culture and various patterns (symbolism and textiles)

9:45-11:15 Participants will use black marker to draw out a design based off of African textiles, then they will fill empty spaces with watercolor paint

11:15-11:45 Sketch ideas/ draw final piece for the culture (check-in with participants)

11:45-12:00 Clean up

Day 10: Review/ Paint/ Reflection

9:00-9:30 Review last week's culture, Adinkra printmaking

9:30-11:00 Paint final piece (check-in with participants) Participants will use a Styrofoam plate to create a relief image based off of African patterns. They will use ink to create multiple prints in different colors

11:00-11:15 Clean up

11:15- 12:00 Class reflection (5 minutes each) facilitated by teachers



Handouts: Japanese



Period: Late Jōmon period (ca. 2500–1000 B.C.)

Culture: Japan

Medium: Earthenware with incised decoration

Dimensions: H. 7 7/8 in. (20 cm); Diam. 6 1/2 in. (16.5 cm)

Classification: Ceramics



Period: Middle Jomon period (ca. 3500–2500 B.C.)

Culture: Japan

Medium: Earthenware with cord-marked and incised decoration

Dimensions: H. 13 in. (33 cm)

Classification: Ceramics

Japanese Kimono



Kimono symbolism

The images used on kimono often have complex levels of meaning. The most popular bird depicted on kimono is the crane. Believed to live for a thousand years and to inhabit the land of the immortals, it is a symbol of longevity and good fortune.



(Left) Kimono, Japan, early 19th - mid 20th century. Museum no. T.18-1963. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

(Right) Detail Kimono, Japan, early 19th - mid 20th century. Museum no. T.18-1963. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Specific motifs were used to indicate virtues or attributes of the wearer, or relate to the season or occasion such as weddings and festivals where it bestows good fortune on the wearer.



Kimono, 1860-1890, Japan. Museum no. 874-1891. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Colors also have strong metaphorical and cultural meanings. Dyes are seen to embody the spirit of the plants from which they are extracted. Any medicinal property is also believed to be transferred to the colored cloth. Blue, for example, derives from indigo (ai), which is used to treat bites and stings, so wearing blue fabric is thought to serve as a repellent to snakes and insects.

The introduction of the concept of the five elements from China to Japan in the 6th century gave colors a cosmological dimension. Fire, water, earth, wood and metal are associated with particular directions, seasons, virtues and colours. Black, for example, corresponds to water, north, Winter and wisdom. Colours also have strong poetic significance. Purple, for example, is a metaphor for undying love, the imagery deriving from the fact that gromwell (murasaki), the plant used to create the dye, has very long roots. Perhaps the most popular colour for kimono is red, derived from safflower (benibana). Red signifies youthful glamour and allure, and so is suitable for the garments of young women.

Natural motifs

The richest source for kimono motifs comes from the natural world. Flowers such as peonies, wisteria, bush clover and hollyhocks frequently appear on garments. Many of them, for example cherry blossom, chrysanthemums and maple leaves, have a seasonal significance.

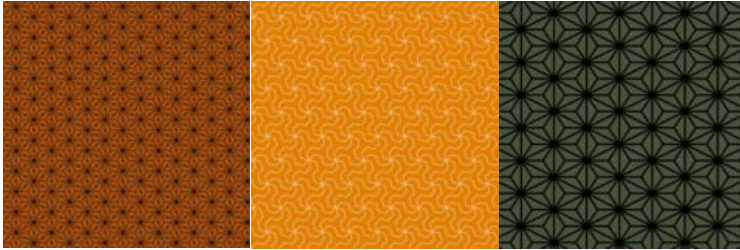


Kimono, 1780-1800, Japan. Museum no. FE.106-1982. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Pine, bamboo and plum are known collectively as the Three Friends of Winter (*shōchikubai*), and are symbols of longevity, perseverance and renewal. The pine tree is an evergreen and lives for many years, bamboo bends in the wind but never breaks, and the plum is the first tree to blossom each year. The plum is particularly favoured for winter kimono as its use suggests that spring is not far away.

Birds, animals, butterflies and dragonflies also appear on kimono, along with other motifs drawn from the natural world such as water, snow and clouds. On some kimono whole landscapes of mountains and streams are depicted.

麻の葉: ASANOHA



Asanoha depicts a geometric design of hemp leaves. Hemp has long been an important plant in Japan, being the primary clothing fiber along with silk, until the 17th century when cotton was introduced to Japan. It represents growth and good health. Since hemp grows quickly, it was customary to use Asanoha for children's clothes, in hopes that the child would also grow fast and strong.

絞り: SHIBORI



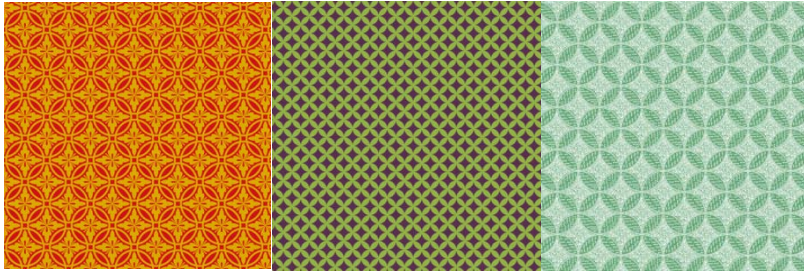
Shibori is a resist-dye technique similar to tie-dyeing, where fabric is tied off with string to form intricate patterns. When the string is removed, it reveals detailed images. Shibori dyeing requires a lot of time and skill to achieve. The small dot patterns shown above are known as Kanoko Shibori.

菊: KIKU



The Chrysanthemum, or *Kiku* in Japanese, is a symbol that represents longevity and rejuvenation. When first introduced to Japan during the Nara period, the Japanese Royal Family was fascinated with the Chrysanthemum. Eventually, during the passing of the years, the Chrysanthemum became the Imperial Family Emblem. Even now, it is used as the imperial symbol of Japan, even appearing on the Japanese passport.

七宝: SHIPPOU



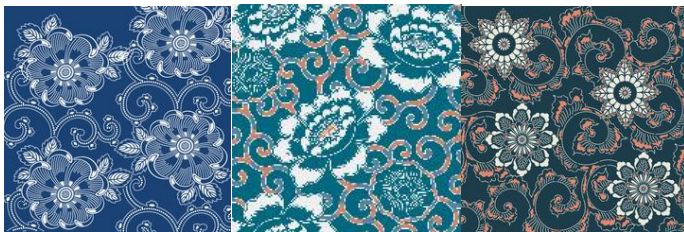
Shippou refers to the seven treasures of Buddhism: gold, silver, lapis lazuli, agate, seashell, amber, and coral. All of these are found on the Asian continent and were precious and rare products. Shippo also means "cloisonné," which refers to a decorating technique using metal strips and gems. The pattern represents these beautiful seven treasures inlaid in metal, in an infinitely repeating pattern.

波: NAMI



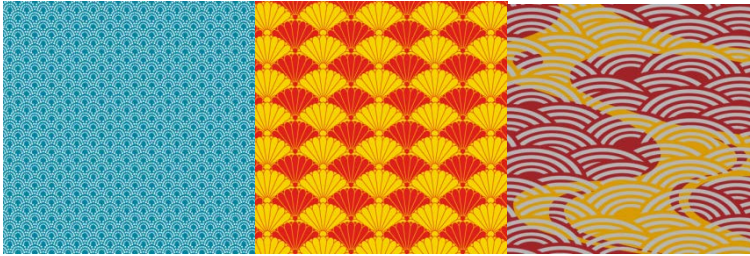
Nami, or "wave," was used as a symbol of gods of the seas. This pattern was also seen on banners and armor from the Sengoku Era (the age of provincial wars), in which troops in war resembled a moving wave. The pattern represents strength, with marvelous depictions of churning, flowing waves.

唐草: KARAKUSA



Karakusa, or "arabesque", is taken from the patterns found on stalks and tendrils, and the links between leaves and vines of plants. It is a symbol for eternity and sometimes a symbol for a family's legacy, like a family tree in Western culture.

青海波: SEIGAIHA



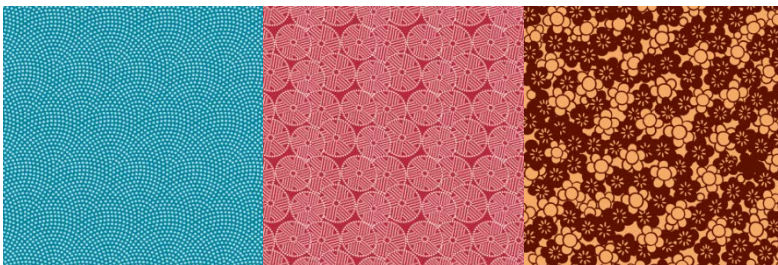
Seigaiha means "blue ocean waves." This pattern has been used in Egypt, Persia, and around the world. In Japan, it is said that the name comes from Seigaiha, the title of an ancient Japanese court dance. In ancient times, it was used for auspicious events. It is considered a symbol of peace, good luck, and good fortune.

縞: SHIMA



This pattern was imported from an island outside of Japan. It came to be known as Shima, which means "stripe." It is said that this pattern was often worn by upper-class aristocrats. The chain-link shima pattern is known as Yoshiwara Shima, referring to the town where the pattern came from. Yoshiwara Shima symbolizes how the town draws you in and hold you, like chains. It has also been described to be the chains linking a community together.

小紋: KOMON



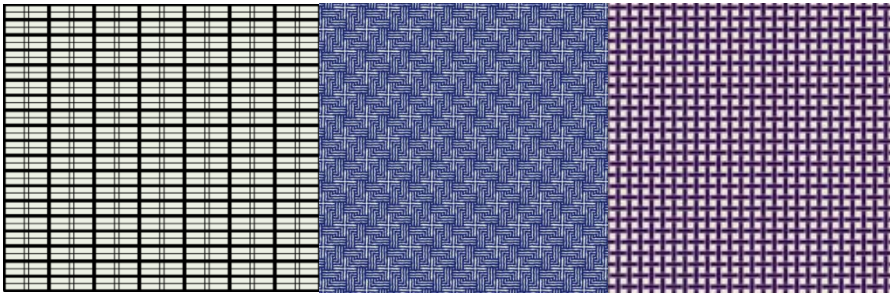
Komon means "fine pattern", and is a name for patterns made up of tiny, tiny details, appearing like a solid color from afar. Komon patterns were originally only used for ceremonial garments. Komon in modern days is mostly used on Kimono fabric, and is filled with both big or small patterns.

亀甲: KIKKO



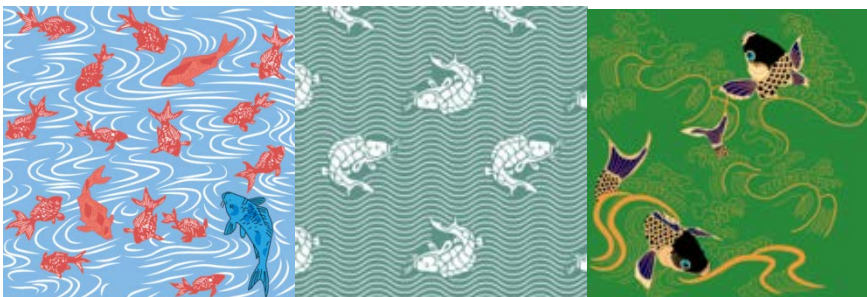
Kikko means "tortoise shell." Originally, this hexagonal geometric design came from Western Asia. The tortoise represents longevity in Japan, and is said to live for ten thousand years. Thus, the Kikkou pattern is meant to symbolize longevity.

格子: KOUSHI



In the Edo period, it was common to have room dividers in a lattice pattern. Thin wood or bamboo was set horizontally and vertically to create this pattern. It is said that Koushi is based off these patterns. Koushi with thicker lines represents power; Koushi with thinner lines stands for elegance.

鯉: KOI



In China, there is a legend of a waterfall emanating from a dragon's home, known for its difficulty to travel upstream. There is a saying that if any koi ("carp") succeeds to reach the gate of the dragon's home, the koi will become a dragon. Based on this legend, the combination of koi and flowing water has become an auspicious pattern symbolizing success in life, commonly meaning a successful career.

雲&雷: KUMO & KAMINARI



In ancient times, this pattern was called Unki ("cloud air"), because it looks like the rising clouds that come from mountains, where the gods are supposed to live. Now, it can be called Kumo, meaning "cloud." The name Kaminarimon comes from ancient Chinese, and represents a spiraling visualization of lightning.

立涌: TACHIWAKU



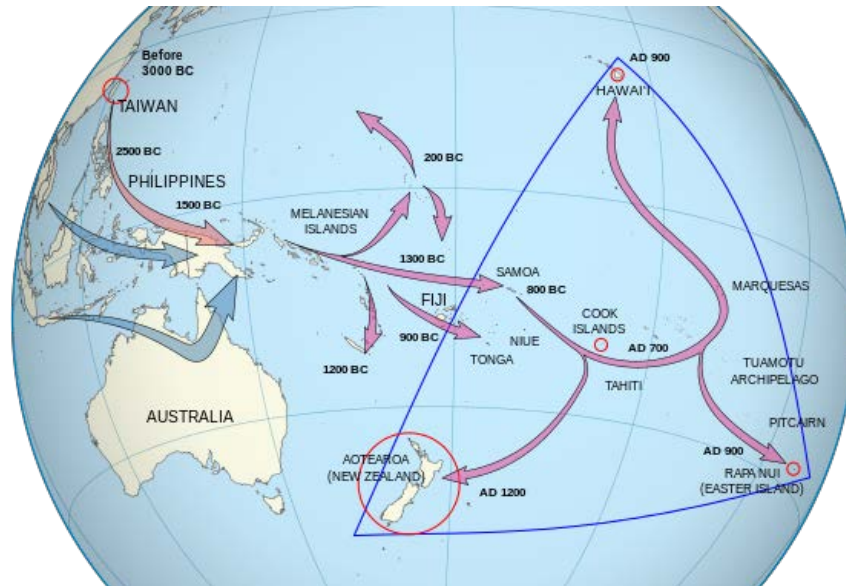
Tachiwaku is the pattern resembling rising steam. In the Heian period, the pattern required advanced fabric making techniques. Therefore, it was exclusively used on clothes for the upper class. There are various kinds of combinations with other patterns Tachiwaku.

矢絣: YAGASURI



The Yagasuri pattern depicts the fletching of arrows, which was an important skill in ancient Japan, but continues to be practiced in modern ceremonies. Yagasuri is often seen in graduations and weddings. It represents steadfastness and determination, as an arrow that is shot straight never comes back.

Maori



1. Archaic period (1280–1500)
2. Classic period (1500–1642)
3. Early European contact (1642–1840)

- Are the indigenous Polynesian people of New Zealand. The Māori originated with settlers from eastern Polynesia, who arrived in New Zealand in several waves of canoe voyages at some time between 1250 and 1300 CE.
- Over several centuries in isolation, the Polynesian settlers developed a unique culture that became known as the "Māori", with their own language, a rich mythology, distinctive crafts and performing arts.
- With the arrival of Europeans in the 17th century, Maori adopted aspects of western society and culture
- Recently, approximately 600,000 people in New Zealand identified as Maori, making up roughly 15% of the national population.
- Maori culture has historically been oral. This means they had no written language to pass on cultural heritage. As a result carvings and other art forms flourished as a means to pass on ancestry, major historic events, beliefs, legends, and other cultural elements.
- Maori carvings are rich in symbolism and use common patterns, though styles differ between tribes. Symbols include the tiki, which represents the human figure, and the manaia, a creature with bird-like head and serpent-like body, associated with guardianship. Traditional patterns used in carving were often inspired by the natural environment, including spider webs, fish scales, and the unfurling fronds of the fern (koru). As well as the White Heron bird is a symbol of prestige, purity, and uniqueness, the kiwi bird, and the huia bird, of which the long feathers were used as hair adornments by Maori chiefs and notables.



Symbols and patterns



Tiki

One of the most popular and most recognizable Maori symbols. Tiki is emblematic for the whole Polynesian hemisphere, an emblem of Polynesian cultures from Hawaii to New Zealand. According to legends tiki was the first man on earth who originated from the stars. Tiki is a good luck charm meant to keep evil spirits away.



Koru (Spiral)

Koru is the Maori word for “bight” or “loop” and refers to new shoots of the silver fern. The circular movement towards an inner coil refers to ‘going back to the beginning’. The unfurling frond itself is symbolic for new life, new beginnings, hope, perfection, rebirth, a new start, awakening, personal growth, purity, nurturing, a new phase (in life), the spirit of rejuvenation, and peace. It’s incorporated in more intricate designs such as carvings and Maori facial tattoos.



Matau (Fish Hook)

Originally the Maori have been fishermen. Their main food source was the sea so a fish hook of high quality was a valuable item to possess.

Worn around the neck the hook became a symbol of prosperity, abundance, good health, power, authority, and respect for the sea and its life in it. It is also believed to provide good luck and safety while traveling over water.



Pikorua (Single Twist)

The Maori **single twist** symbol consists of a closed loop with three knots. Pikorua, as the Maori name this symbol, refers to eternal emerging paths in life. The eight-shaped single twist symbolizes the strength of the bond between two people, their loyalty and friendship. It signifies the spiritual merger of two people for eternity. The twist is a powerful statement of loyalty, friendship, and love.



Double and Triple Twist

Also an eternity symbol. Refers to the bond between peoples or cultures rather than individuals. These Maori pendants were traditionally given as an offering of friendship between different tribes.



Circle – Porowhita

The closed circle with a hole in between represents the never ending circle of life and nature. It also stands for the belief that life has no beginning or end- *“a never-ending journey of discovery and re-discovery. The journey reflects the importance of being on the move in the present while realizing that the path of tradition is a two-way track, it points, simultaneously, in the present towards the past and the future.”*



Maori Dolphin – Papahu

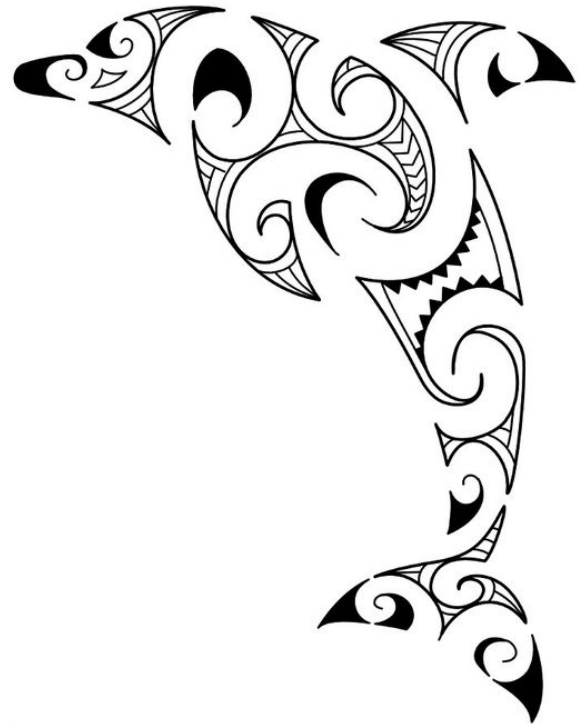
The dolphin is another Maori symbol of protection. Schools of dolphins were reported to attack sharks circling around canoes.

The dolphin shows affinity with the sea and nature in general. Resembles a free spirit. Nowadays the dolphin represents protection on all types of travelers.



Guardian Angel (Manaia)

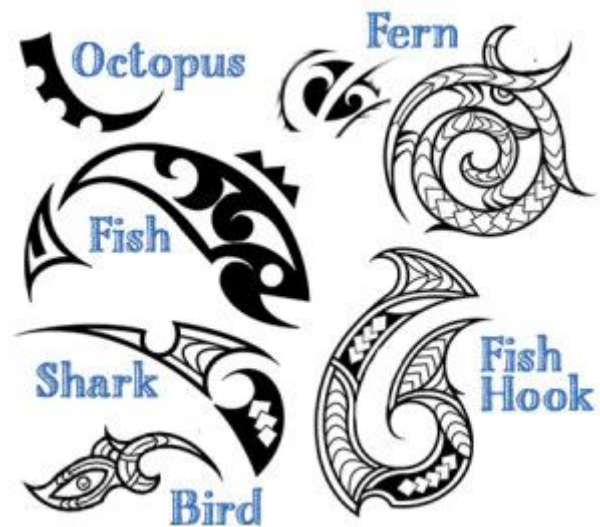
The manaia symbolizes a mythical being with a bird’s head a human body and fish tail. Manaia is considered the messenger between the Gods and mortals. In Maori culture the bird is thought to be an omen-carrier or intermediary between man and the spirits. That’s why manaia, with its specific body shape, represents spiritual power and is seen as the guide that leads the spirits to heaven. Sometimes the manaia symbol is described as some kind of aura; the invisible light surrounding a person.





Weaving,

New Zealand's climate prevented the Polynesian ancestors of Māori from growing their usual plants for making fabric. Instead they developed a rich culture of weaving, largely based on flax. They produced beautiful objects ranging from the practical (food baskets and floor mats) to the treasured and prestigious (intricately woven cloaks).





The star and crescent is the best-known symbol used to represent Islam.

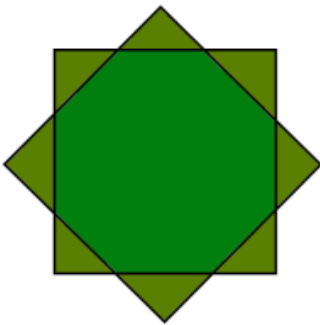
The symbol is not Muslim in origin, it was a polytheistic icon adopted during the spread of Islam, and its use today is sometimes controversial in the Muslim world. The crescent and star are often said to be Islamic symbols, but historians say that they were the insignia of the Ottoman Empire, not of Islam as a whole.



Allah. The words "Allah" in Arabic script or characters can be regarded as visually representing Islam as a symbol.



The Hamsa, also known as the Humes hand, the Hand of Fatima and the Hand of Miriam is a popular symbol found throughout the Middle East and northern Africa, particularly within the Islamic and Jewish faiths. It is one of the national symbols of Algeria and appears in its emblem. Here, the Hamsa is called the Hand of Fatima after Fatima Zahra, daughter of the Prophet Muhammad. The five fingers of the hand are further associated with the Five Pillars of Islam.



The **eight pointed star** began to appear in Islamic art in the Middle Ages. It is referred to as khatim or khatim-sulayman, meaning "seal of the prophets".

The Islamic Decorative Canon



Calligraphy



Geometric

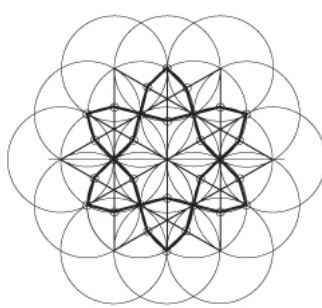
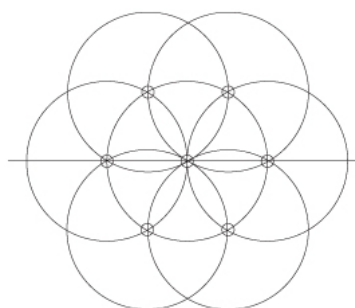


Arabesque

The **arabesque** is a form of artistic decoration consisting of "surface decorations based on rhythmic linear patterns of scrolling and interlacing foliage, tendrils" or plain lines, often combined with other elements. It usually consists of a single design which can be 'tiled' or seamlessly repeated as many times as desired. The designs are geometric and floral, in which plants grow according to the laws of geometry rather than nature



Geometry. In Islamic art the geometric figure of the circle represents the primordial symbol of unity and the ultimate source of all diversity in creation. The natural division of the circle into regular divisions is the ritual starting point for many traditional Islamic patterns, as demonstrated in the drawings below. The geometric designs are often built on combinations of repeated squares and circles, which may be overlapped and interlaced,



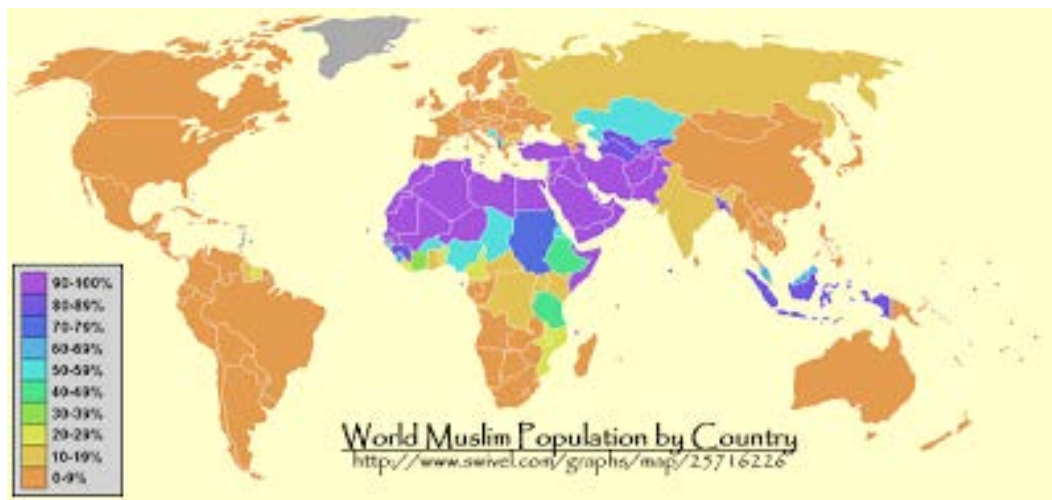
Islamic **calligraphy** is the artistic practice of handwriting, based upon the alphabet in the lands sharing a common Islamic cultural heritage. It includes Arabic, Ottoman, and Persian calligraphy. It is known in Arabic as khatt Islami (اسلامي خط), meaning Islamic line, design, or construction. The development of Islamic calligraphy is strongly tied to the Qur'an; chapters, and excerpts from the Qur'an is a common and almost universal text upon which Islamic calligraphy is based.



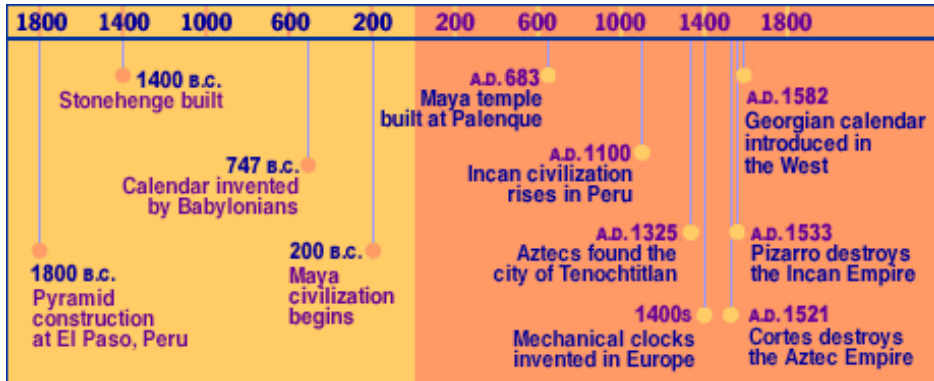
Islamic History



Name Means	Arabic, "submission"
Adherents	1.6 billion
Place Founded	Arabian Peninsula
Date Founded	622 CE
Founder(s)	Muhammad
Major Branches	Sunni, Shi'a, Sufism
Beliefs	One God (Allah in Arabic); the same God revealed (imperfectly) in the Jewish and Christian Bibles
Practices	Five Pillars: Faith, Prayer, Alms, Pilgrimage, Fasting. Mosque services on Fridays. Ablutions before prayer. No alcohol or pork. Holidays related to the pilgrimage and fast of Ramadan.
Main Holidays	Al-Hijra, Ramadan, 'Id Al-Fitr
Texts	Qur'an (sacred text); Hadith (tradition)
Symbols	Star and crescent; name of Allah in Arabic; color green; mosque silhouette.



- **Islam** (Arabic: الإسلام *al-islām*) "obediance (or submission) to God" is a monotheistic faith, one of the Abrahamic religions, and the world's second largest religion.
- Many Muslims dislike the term religion, since to them it implies a private faith whereas the ideal for most Muslims is a community in which the religious, social, and political are united.
- Islam is the second largest religion in the world with over 1 billion followers.
- About nine out of 10 people in the Middle East and North Africa are Muslim, or more than 205 million people, according to the Pew Center.
- About 13% of Muslims live in Indonesia, the largest Muslim-majority country, 31% in South Asia, the largest population of Muslims in the world, 23% in the Middle East-North Africa (MENA), and 15% in Sub-Saharan Africa. Pew Center research projects that more than 75 percent of Israel will be Muslim by 2030.
- **The essentials of Islamic art**
 - Includes all Muslim art, not just explicitly religious art
 - Islamic art seeks to portray the meaning and essence of things, rather than just their physical form
 - Crafts and decorative arts are regarded as having full art status
 - Painting and sculpture are not thought of as the noblest forms of art
 - Calligraphy is a major art-form
 - Writing has high status in Islam
 - Writing is a significant decoration for objects and buildings
 - Books are a major art-form
 - Geometry and patterns are important
 - People do not appear in specifically religious art



Aztec & Maya

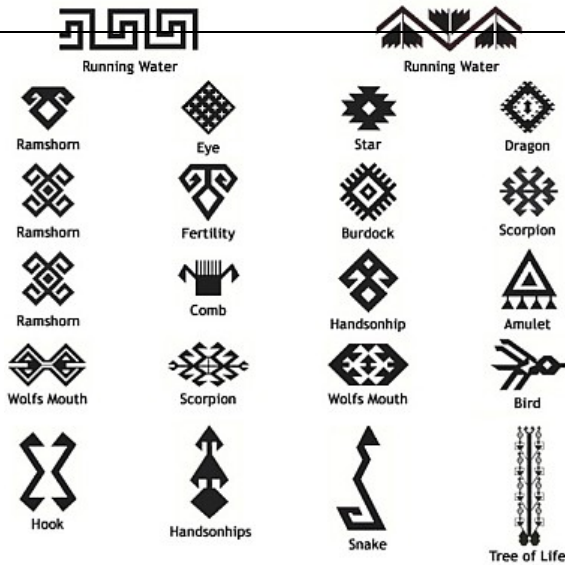
	Aztec	Maya
Location	<i>Central America, Mexico</i>	<i>Central America</i>
Time Periods	<i>1200 to 1521</i>	<i>400BC-1517AD Height: 200-900AD</i>
Capital	<i>Tenochtitlan</i>	<i>Tikal, Chichen Itza, Copan, Palenque, Mayapan</i>
Economy	<i>Farming (corn, beans, tomatoes, squash) - chinampas</i>	<i>Farming (corn, beans, squash) Trade</i>
Religion	<i>Many gods, sun god most important, human sacrifice</i>	<i>Many gods, king's blood is sacred, sacrificed animals and some humans</i>
Social System	<i>Different classes of people, warriors have high social status</i>	<i>Different classes of people</i>
Government	<i>Very powerful king, highly centralized, war was for captives and tribute</i>	<i>Well organized city states each with a king, war was for tribute</i>
Technology	<i>Built monumental architecture, chinampas, calendar</i>	<i>Writing, math, monumental architecture, calendar</i>
End of Civilization	<i>Cortes and the Spanish kill the king, the empire ended</i>	<i>Abandoned cities, disappeared</i>
Contributions	<i>Corn, calendar, architecture</i>	<i>Calendar, corn, writing, math, architecture</i>



Similarities	Differences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corn (maize) was the basis of the diet as well as beans and squash; corn was soaked in a lime solution which added calcium and made a greater range of proteins available. • Cacao (chocolate) only grew in the tropics but everyone loved it and the Aztecs imported it. • There were no cattle or sheep or goats so they didn't have to knock down the forest to graze their animals. • Everyone walked everywhere or travelled in canoes (no cars or horses or the wheel) so it was a lively landscape and seascape with people selling food and drinks and resting places to everyone else. • They both liked tobacco and smoked cigars (not pipes). • There was lots of trade between the two areas (Valley of Mexico and Yucatan Peninsula); merchants were really important to both societies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both kept written records and books, but the Maya had a written language that was phonetic. • The Maya also inscribed stone monuments with text on the histories of dynasties. They practiced astronomy, used mathematics, and had the concept of zero. • The Maya were also sea traders and great maritime people; the Aztecs were more land and lake-oriented. • Art styles were different. The Maya created representations of people. The Aztecs were wonderful at depicting realistic animals with great sensitivity.

Aztec Art

- The Aztecs often used metaphors throughout their art. For example, the hummingbird represented the sun god, the eagle represented the warrior, and flowers represented the beauty of life.
- Symbols were portrayed using realistic human forms, as well as forms of nature. For example, jaguars, snakes (rattlesnakes were a favourite), dogs, birds and even insects were common. The human forms have come to be known as a defining characteristic of the Late Postclassical period in central Mexico.
- The highest form of art in the Aztec culture was poetry. Many of their poems were about the gods and mythology, but others were about everyday life. They called poetry "flower and song". The poetry and stories of the Aztecs were passed down verbally from generation, and didn't begin to write down their poetry until after the Spanish arrived. The largest collections of Aztec poems were put together in the 1500s. These books include the Romances de los señores de la Nueva España and the Cantares mexicanos.



Aztec Calendar

There is not just one Aztec calendar, there are two more or less independent systems. One calendar, called the *xiuhpohualli*, has 365 days. It describes the days and rituals related to the seasons, and therefore might be called the agricultural year or the solar year. The other calendar has 260 days. In Nahuatl, the language of the Aztecs, it is called the *tonalpohualli* or, the day-count, which is the sacred calendar.

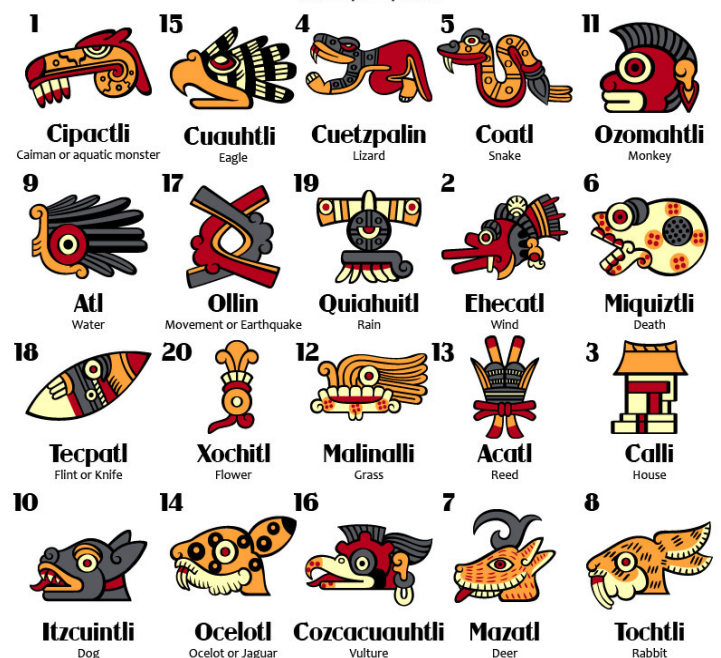
The Aztec calendar can be imagined as two wheels connected to each other. One wheel has the numbers 'one' to 'thirteen' written on it. The second wheel has twenty symbols on it. In the merging point, the number one combines with the first symbol. When the wheels start moving number two combines with the second symbol. After fourteen days, the wheel with the numbers shows number one again. The other wheel now shows the fourteenth symbol. After 260 days, the two wheels return to their initial position.

Each day-sign respects a God or an Elemental Force, the provider of the Life Energy for that day.



Tonalpohualli

Aztec's year symbols



Mayan art

- The Maya are perhaps most famous for their work in stone. They built many monumental structures including tall pyramids and palaces. One popular type of Maya sculpture was the stela. A stela was a large tall stone slab covered with carvings and writing. Carving The Maya also created detailed carvings in other materials such as wood and jade.
- The Maya painted murals on the walls of their buildings including their houses, temples, and public buildings. The subjects of the murals varied widely including scenes from daily life, mythology, battles, and religious ceremonies.



CHAN 'sky'	WINIK 'person'	WITZ 'mountain'	K'IN 'sun'	B'ALAM 'jaguar'	K'AK' 'fire'
BAK 'bone'	WAY 'spirit'	JUUN 'book'	JA' 'water'	AJAW 'lord'	MUYAL 'cloud'
IX 'woman'	CH'AM 'to grab'	K'UK' 'quetzal'	CHAN 'snake'	CH'UL 'holy'	CHOK 'to scatter'
JAAB' 'year'	YAX 'blue/green'	PAKAL 'shield'	TOK 'flint'	NAJ 'house'	K'AL 'twenty'



Mayan Calendar

The Mayan Calendar consists of three separate corresponding calendars, the *Long Count*, the *Tzolkin* (divine calendar) and the *Haab* (civil calendar). Time is cyclical in the calendars and a set number of days must occur before a new cycle can begin.

The three calendars are used simultaneously. The Tzolkin and the Haab identify and name the days, but not the years. The Long Count date comes first, then the Tzolkin date and last the Haab date. A typical Mayan date would read: 13.0.0.0.0 4 Ahau 8 Kumku, where 13.0.0.0.0 is the Long Count date, 4 Ahau is the Tzolkin date and 8 Kumku is the Haab date.

0	1	2	3	4
	•	••	•••	••••
5	6	7	8	9
—	•	••	•••	••••
10	11	12	13	14
— —	•	••	•••	••••
15	16	17	18	19
— — —	•	••	•••	••••

Mayan / Aztec Calendar
Cardboard Cutout
 42" Tall by 42" Wide
 5 Foot Tall by 5 Foot Wide
 7 Foot Tall by 7 Foot Wide



Shown Here As 42Inch Tall!



Aztec



Mayan



Sub-Saharan African Art

Adinkra symbols of the Akan people of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana.

Adinkra symbols are visual representation of concepts and aphorism developed by the Akan people of Ghana. Adinkra symbols are extensively used in fabrics, pottery, logos, and advertising. They can also be found on architectural buildings, as well as on traditional Akan gold weights, and sculptures as well as stools used for traditional rituals. The adinkra symbols are not just decorative objects, or drawings, but actual messages conveying ancient traditional wisdom relevant to aspects of life or the environment.

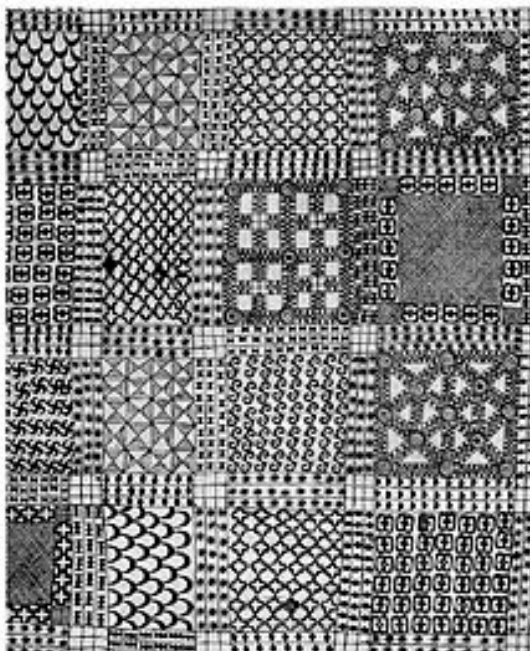
A lot of the Adinkra symbols have meanings linked to proverbs, such as the sankofa symbol. Sankofa, in the Twi language, translates in English to "reach back and get it" (san – to return; ko – to go; fa – to look, to seek and take) or the Adinkra symbol of a bird with its head turned backwards taking an egg off its back, or of a stylised heart shape. It is often associated with the proverb, "Se wo were fi na wosankofa a yenkyi," which translates "It is not wrong to go back for that which you have



Sankofa symbols



Date: 19th century
Geography: Mali or Ghana, Niger River
Culture: Fulani peoples (?)
Medium: Cotton, wool, natural dye
Dimensions: H. 51 x W. 120 in. (129.5 x 304.8 cm)



Adinkra in 1817



[AKOFENA](#)

"sword of war"

courage, valor



[AKOKONAN](#)

- "the leg of a hen"

mercy, nurturing



[NYAME NNWU
NA MAWU](#)

- "God never dies, therefore I cannot die"

life after death



[ASASE YE DURU](#)

"the Earth has weight"

divinity of Mother Earth



[AYA](#)

"fern"

endurance,
resourcefulness



[BESE SAKA](#)

"sack of kola nuts"

affluence, abundance,
unity



[BOA ME NA
ME MMOA WO](#)

"help me and let me help
you"

cooperation,
interdependence



[DAME-DAME](#)

name of a board game

intelligence, ingenuity



[DENKYEM](#)

"crocodile"

adaptability



[DUAFE](#)

"wooden comb"

beauty, hygiene,
feminine qualities



[DWENNIMMEN](#)

- "ram's horns"

humility and strength



[OWO FORO ADOBE](#)

"snake climbing the raffia
tree"

steadfastness, prudence,
diligence



[FAWOHODIE](#)

"independence"

independence, freedom,
emancipation



[FIHANKRA](#)

- "house/compound"

security, safety



[NYANSAPO](#)

"wisdom knot"

wisdom, ingenuity, intelligence and patience



[FUNTUNFUNEFU
DENKYEMFUNEFU](#)

"siamese crocodiles"

democracy, unity in diversity



[GYE NYAME](#)

- "except for God"

supremacy of God



[HYE WONHYE](#)

- "that which cannot be burnt"

imperishability, endurance



[MMERE DANE](#)

"time changes"

change, life's dynamics



[MMUSUYI DEE](#)

"that which removes ill luck"

good fortune, sanctity



[MPATAPO](#)

"knot of reconciliation"

peacemaking, reconciliation



[MPUANNUM](#)

"five tufts" (of hair)

priestly office, loyalty, adroitness



[NEA ONNIM NO SUA
A. OHU](#)

"he who does not know can know from learning"

knowledge, life-long education



[NEA OPE SE OBEDI
HENE](#)

"he who wants to be king"

service, leadership



[NKYINKYIM](#)

- "twistings"

initiative, dynamism, versatility



[NSAA](#)

type of hand-woven cloth

excellence, genuineness, authenticity

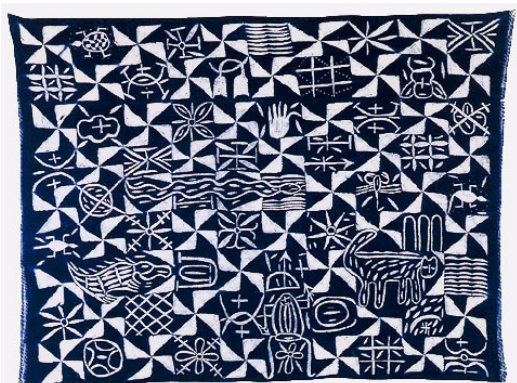
Cloth production methods include woven, dyed, appliquéd, embroidered and printed techniques. Printing and dyeing and hand painting occurred on all types of woven cloth and also on leather (hide) and bark.

Fibres traditionally used for weaving are predominantly cotton but also include wool, silk, raffia, bark and bast fibres like flax and jute which produce linen cloth.

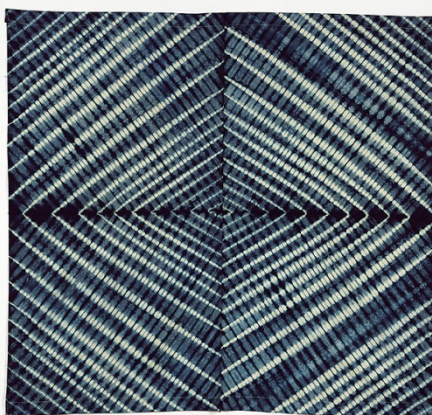
It is very seldom that a textile piece is produced by just one process and when one considers that everything is hand executed in mostly rural circumstances, one has to admire the commitment and skill involved in making the piece. African textiles are highly collectable artworks and will continue to gain in value as traditions disappear and the authentic items become unavailable.



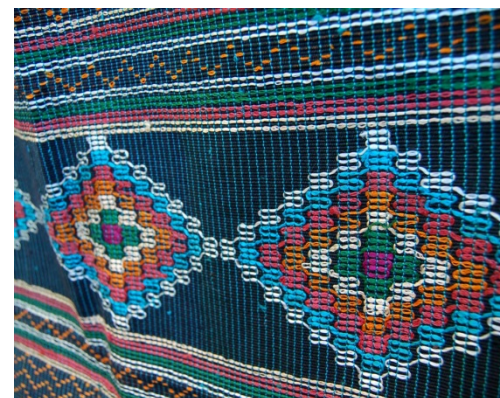
Kente cloth - woven by Ashanti and Ewe people
Kente, known as nwentom in Akan, is a type of silk and cotton fabric made of interwoven cloth strips and is native to the Akan ethnic group of South Ghana.



Ukara - dyed indigo cloth by Igbo people
ukara is produced by a sub-group in a village of the Ezillo community in present-day Ebonyi State in the Igbo area in southeastern Nigeria. Worn as personal wrappers during initiations and at social events, ukara cloth distinguishes Ekpe members.



Adire - tie-dye produced by Yoruba people
Adire is the name given to indigo dyed cloth produced by Yoruba women of south western Nigeria using a variety of resist dye techniques.



Akwete cloth - woven by Igbo people
Akwete cloth is a unique hand woven textile produced in Igboland for which the town of Akwete in Abia state, Nigeria is famous.

Uses of African textiles

- African textiles have had and still have an exceptional significance as a means of **communication**, information and mutual association within particular communities. There is spiritual and historical significance in not only the choice of colours, dyes and type of threads used, but also in the decorative element, the symbols used and the figural compositions which are directly related to historical proverbs and events. They represent a form of story telling often taking the place of the written word and convey messages of importance for an individual, family, or larger social unit.
- African textiles are often used for social and political comment, for **commemorative** purposes marking special occasions like political or tribal events, weddings, funerals, burials, naming ceremonies. Historically, their usage was controlled by chiefs and regional leaders and they were distributed with favour.
- As **personal adornment** they are wrapped as skirts round waists and hips and thrown over the shoulder or made into tunics and robes. African textiles are not always worn but sometimes used as backdrops against which public ceremonies were held.
- African textiles are also used quite simply as items of **warmth or cover** but centuries of tradition and a culture of crafting beautiful items imbues some African communities with an air of elegance and vibrancy in their clothing attire that one does not experience in the Western world which chooses conformity above individual expression.

