



Hunting coat

This information about the hunting coat has been created without the input of the community of origin. We recognise that what we share is a stepping stone to inclusivity. The next step is working with the Innu community in order to more accurately represent their material culture, history and contemporary experiences.

The Innu people, also known as Montagnais and Naskapi, are the Indigenous people of the Labrador Peninsula, Quebec. Their lives prior to the 1950s were structured around their subarctic environment in which survival was hinged on successful hunting to sustain their communities during the winter months.

Hunting was an important aspect of Innu life. Caribou provided an abundance of raw materials which supplied food and clothing. Hunting involved protocols that were outlined to show respect for the herd they hunted. The hunt began with a dream by the hunter about the upcoming season. The dream was shared with a woman close to him and she interpreted the dream onto that year's hunting coat through geometric motifs. After the season, the coat was retired and a new one was made for the following hunting season.

Hunting coat

This Innu hunting coat was created from caribou hide and decorated with earth and animal-derived pigments. Hunting coats like this were created by Innu women who painted designs on them that were interpretations of dreams from their male counterparts. It was believed that such patterns, along with a strict set of hunting protocols, ensured a successful caribou hunt.

Labrador, Quebec, North America

Innu

Likely early to mid-1800s

Yorkshire Philosophical Society Museum

Am1921,1014.112

