

Exploring the world of

DYING ART FORMS

North America



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Research Scope



Identification of global art forms that are considered dying or near extinction



Historical origins and cultural significance of these dying art forms



Evolution of the dying art forms



Factors that contribute to the decline of these art forms

Focus Geography

North America

ART FORM

Seminole Patchwork



Image Source:
<https://sewsitali.blogspot.com/2011/08/vintage-apron-seminole-piecing.html>



Image Source:
<https://dianehelentjaris.substack.com/p/seminole-patchwork>

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Image Source:
<https://www.pattislastresort.com/module/class/438130/seminole-patchwork--a-stunning-jacket-or-vest>

ART FORM

Seminole Patchwork

Seminole patchwork is a textile art form practiced by the Seminole tribe, indigenous to the southeastern United States. The patchwork technique became prominent in the early 20th century, coinciding with the introduction of hand-crank sewing machines to Seminole communities.

The intricate, colorful patterns of Seminole patchwork are formed by sewing together small strips of fabric, which are then sewn into larger pieces to create geometric designs. The patterns often feature horizontal bands of diamonds, squares, and triangles, symbolizing nature and traditional beliefs.

Traditionally used to adorn clothing, particularly skirts and jackets, this patchwork style became a symbol of Seminole identity and cultural pride. The preparation requires a deep understanding of color harmony and precise sewing skills to ensure clean lines and uniformity in the design.

Over time, Seminole patchwork has gained recognition as a significant part of Native American textile heritage.

How has this art form evolved over time?

Seminole patchwork originated as a practical method of repurposing fabric scraps, but it quickly evolved into a unique artistic tradition. As the Seminole people adapted to the availability of new materials, particularly during the early 1900s, the designs became more complex and vibrant. The introduction of sewing machines allowed for greater precision and speed in creating patchwork patterns. Over the decades, the art form expanded beyond clothing to include quilts, bags, and other accessories.

In contemporary times, Seminole patchwork has been celebrated in fashion shows and cultural exhibitions, bringing broader awareness to its intricate craftsmanship.



Image Source: <https://www.pendleton-usa.com/blog/pendletons-tamiami-trail-blanket-and-seminole-patchwork/>

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Seminole Patchwork



What factors have contributed to the decline of this art form?

- The increasing availability of mass-produced clothing has reduced the demand for handmade patchwork garments, impacting the economic viability of the craft.
- Younger generations often don't consider patchwork as fashionable or relevant in modern fashion, leading to a decline in interest among young Seminole artisans.
- The cost of high-quality materials and the time-intensive nature of creating patchwork garments make it difficult for artisans to compete with cheaper, mass-produced alternatives.
- The loss of traditional sewing and crafting skills within the community has also contributed to the decline of this art form.

Image Source: <https://www.pendleton-usa.com/blog/pendletons-tamiami-trail-blanket-and-seminole-patchwork/>

ART FORM

Edgefield Pottery



Image Source:
<https://www.edgefieldadvertiser.com/tag/old-edgefield-pottery/>



Image Source:
<https://www.mesdajournal.org/2021/edgefield-district-stoneware-the-potters-legacy/>

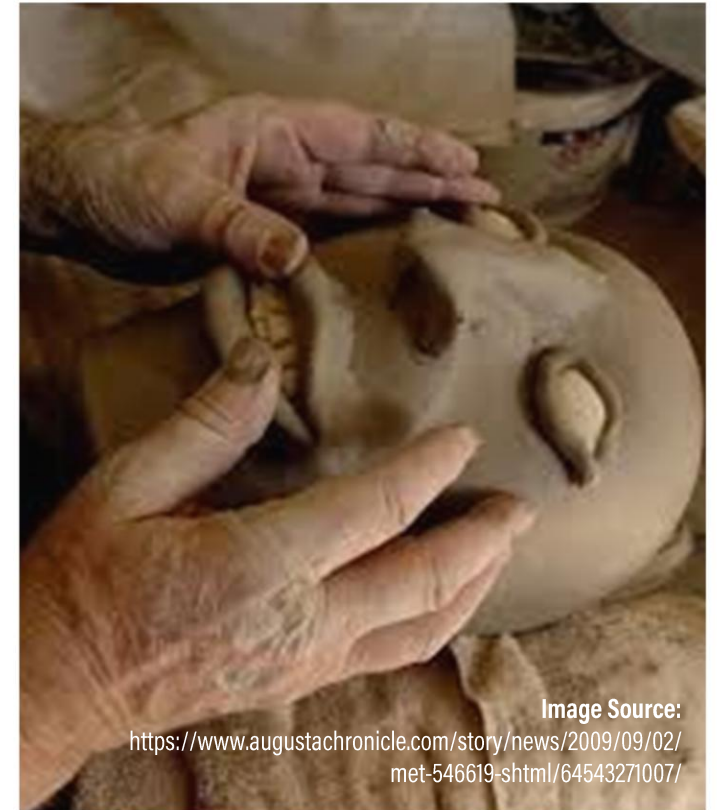


Image Source:
<https://www.augustachronicle.com/story/news/2009/09/02/met-546619-shtml/64543271007/>

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Edgefield Pottery

Edgefield pottery is a unique style of African-American pottery that originated in the Edgefield District of South Carolina in the early 19th century. The pottery is best known for its alkaline-glazed stoneware, a technique brought to the American South by enslaved potters from West Africa. These potters, including the renowned potter David Drake (also known as Dave the Potter), created large, durable vessels that were used for storing food and liquids. Edgefield pottery is significant not only for its craftsmanship but also for its historical and cultural connections to the African-American experience and the legacy of slavery in the United States.

Edgefield pottery is coated with an alkaline glaze, typically made from a mixture of wood ash and lime. The glaze gives the pottery its distinctive green or brownish tint and helps create a durable, watertight finish. The production process requires skilled craftsmanship, particularly in shaping the large, often heavy vessels and applying the glaze evenly.

How has this art form evolved over time?

Edgefield pottery originated out of necessity, with enslaved potters producing vessels for plantation use. Over time, however, the craft evolved into a highly respected art form, particularly due to the work of David Drake, who inscribed poetry and proverbs onto his pottery, imbuing it with personal and cultural significance. After the abolition of slavery, the tradition of Edgefield pottery declined, as industrial methods of production became more widespread.

However, in recent years, there has been a resurgence of interest in this unique pottery style, with modern potters and historians seeking to revive and preserve the tradition. Edgefield pottery is now recognized as an important part of African-American heritage.



Image Source:

<https://www.themagazineantiques.com/article/the-origins-of-edgefield-pottery/>

ART FORM

Edgefield Pottery



What factors have contributed to the decline of this art form?

- The industrialization of pottery production and the rise of mass-produced ceramics reduced the demand for handmade stoneware.
- The skill-intense nature of the craft, particularly the shaping of large vessels and the application of alkaline glaze, has limited the number of artisans capable of producing Edgefield pottery.
- The legacy of slavery and the loss of traditional African pottery techniques in the aftermath of the Civil War also contributed to the decline of this craft.
- The limited availability of locally sourced clay and materials needed for alkaline glaze has made it difficult to sustain the craft in its original form.

Image Source: <https://andscape.com/features/potter-jim-mcdowell-and-the-complicated-history-of-face-jugs/>

ART FORM

Sweetgrass Basketry



Image Source:
<https://westchesterareabasketmakersguild.wordpress.com/2015/03/25/hello-world/>



Image Source: <https://www.dukeform.co/all-content/sewing-sweetgrass-baskets-an-interview-with-michael-smalls>



Image Source:
<https://gardenandgun.com/feature/a-lowcountry-legend-mary-jackson/>

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ART FORM

Sweetgrass Basketry

Sweetgrass basketry is an African-American craft that originated with the Gullah community in the Lowcountry region of South Carolina and Georgia. The craft dates back to the 17th century, when enslaved Africans brought their traditional coiled basket-making techniques to the American South.

Originally used for agricultural purposes, particularly in rice cultivation, sweetgrass basketry is recognized as a unique cultural expression of the Gullah people and is prized for its intricate designs and craftsmanship. The baskets are made from natural materials such as sweetgrass, pine needles, and palmetto fronds, all of which are native to the Lowcountry. Each basket is made entirely by hand, with the artisan carefully shaping the coils to create patterns and designs. The natural materials used in sweetgrass basketry give the baskets their distinctive scent and color. The process requires patience and skill, as even a small basket can take several days to complete.

Image Source: <https://www.circlecreativecollective.org/calendar/traditional-sweetgrass-basket-weaving>

How has this art form evolved over time?

Sweetgrass basketry has evolved from a practical craft used for agricultural purposes to a highly sought-after art form. While the baskets were once used primarily for carrying and storing goods, today they are appreciated for their aesthetic beauty and cultural significance.

In recent decades, sweetgrass basketry has gained national recognition, with baskets being displayed in museums and galleries across the United States. The craft has also been passed down through generations within the Gullah community, ensuring its preservation. Modern basket-makers continue to innovate, incorporating new designs and techniques while maintaining the traditional coiling methods.

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Sweetgrass Basketry



Image Source: Wikipedia

What factors have contributed to the decline of this art form?

- The availability of sweetgrass, a key material in this basket-making process, has diminished due to urban development and environmental changes in the Lowcountry region.
- The labor-intense nature of basket-making, combined with the limited economic return, has made it difficult for younger generations to sustain the craft as a full-time occupation.
- The rise of mass-produced baskets and other decorative items has reduced the demand for handmade sweetgrass baskets
- The loss of traditional knowledge and skills within the Gullah community, as fewer young people take up the craft, has also contributed to its decline.

ART FORM

Cowichan Sweaters



Image Source: <https://www.cherylstradingpost.com/>

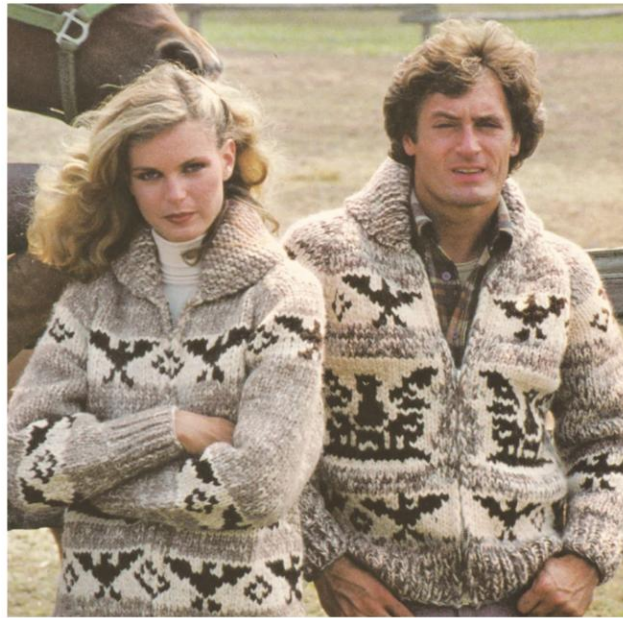


Image Source: Etsy

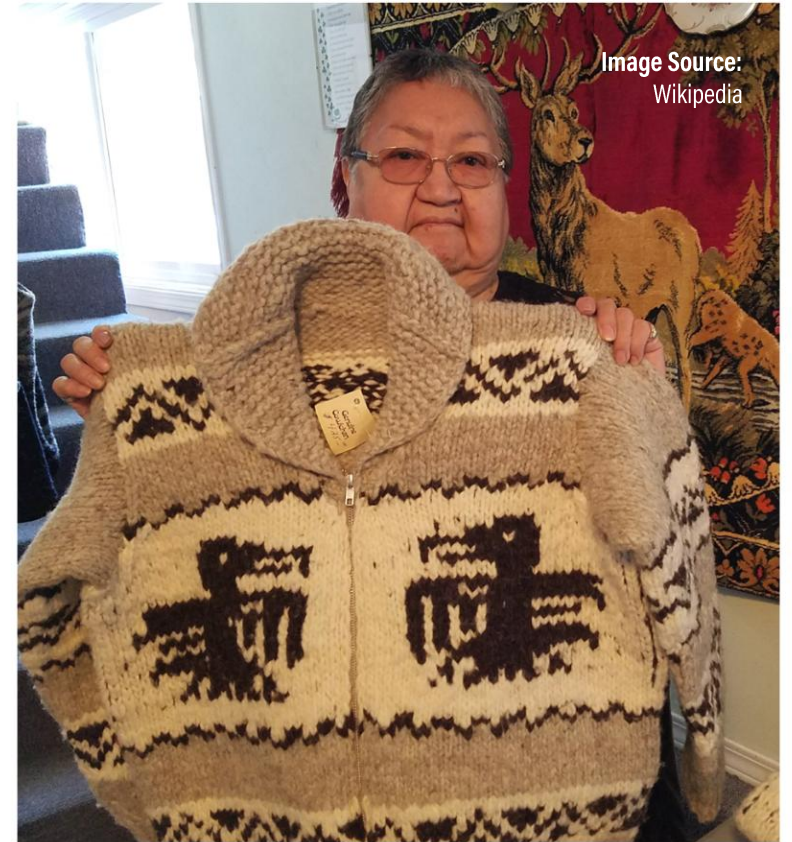


Image Source:
Wikipedia

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Cowichan Sweaters

Cowichan sweaters, conforming with a traditional form of hand-knitting practiced by the Cowichan people, an Indigenous group on Vancouver Island in British Columbia, Canada, are known for their thick, warm construction and distinctive geometric patterns.

Today, Cowichan sweaters are recognized as a symbol of Indigenous craftsmanship and cultural identity in Canada.

Each sweater is knit in one piece, incorporating distinctive patterns such as zigzags, diamonds, and animal motifs, and without seams, to create a durable, water-resistant garment. The natural oils in the wool help make the sweaters resistant to moisture, ideal for the wet, cold climate of the Pacific Northwest. The entire process, from spinning the wool to knitting the sweater, is done by hand, often taking several weeks to complete.

How has this art form evolved over time?

Cowichan sweaters evolved from the introduction of knitting techniques by Scottish settlers to the Cowichan people in the late 19th century. Initially, the Cowichan knitters used the techniques to create practical, warm garments for their community, but over time, they integrated traditional Indigenous designs, incorporating motifs that reflect their cultural identity.

By the early 20th century, Cowichan sweaters had gained popularity outside of Indigenous communities, and becoming iconic pieces of Canadian outerwear. The craft has evolved with modern trends, as contemporary artisans kept experimenting with new designs and colors, while still honoring the traditional knitting techniques. Today, Cowichan sweaters are recognized for their craftsmanship, warmth, and cultural significance.

Image Source: <https://www.harrowsmithmag.com/10557/the-cowichan-sweater>

ART FORM

Cowichan Sweaters



What factors have contributed to the decline of this art form?

- The time-intense nature of hand-knitting makes it difficult for Cowichan artisans to compete with mass-produced garments.
- The introduction of machine-made sweaters that mimic the look of Cowichan designs has reduced the demand for authentic hand-knitted pieces.
- The rising cost of wool and the limited availability of traditional materials have made it harder for artisans to sustain their craft.
- Younger generations may not see sweater-making as a viable career option, leading to a decline in the number of artisans continuing the tradition.

Image Source: <https://www.yammagazine.com/the-story-of-the-cowichan-sweaters/>

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Mi'kmaq Quillwork



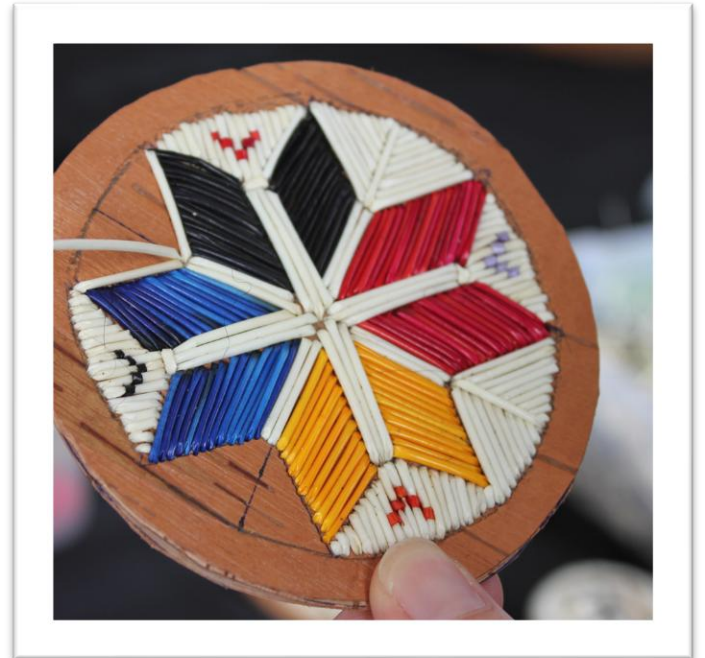
Image Source:
<https://museums.ca/site/awards/2022/research>



Image Source: <https://nsreviews.blog/2022/03/04/the-quill-sisters-give-new-life-to-ancient-art-form/>



Image Source: <https://multiculturalkidblogs.com/2014/11/06/exploring-the-mikmaq-culture-with-a-quillwork-inspired-craft-native-american-heritage-month-blog-hop/>



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ART FORM

Mi'kmaq Quillwork

Mi'kmaq quillwork is an ancient Indigenous art form practiced by the Mi'kmaq people, belonging to one of the First Nations in Canada. It involves the use of porcupine quills to create intricate designs on birchbark, clothing, and other materials. Traditional quillwork often features vibrant colors and geometric or symbolic designs that reflect Mi'kmaq culture.

Quillwork has been a vital part of Mi'kmaq culture for centuries, serving both functional and decorative purposes. The technique is believed to predate the introduction of European beadwork, with designs often depicting significant cultural symbols, such as animals, plants, and traditional stories.

The quillwork process begins with the collection of porcupine quills, which are cleaned, dyed using natural or synthetic dyes, and then softened in water to make them pliable. Birchbark or leather is prepared as the base for the quillwork design.

Artisans use awls or other sharp tools to make holes in the birchbark or leather, through which the quills are threaded and stitched to create the desired pattern. The quills are carefully flattened and sewn into place, resulting in a highly textured, intricate design.

How has this art form evolved over time?

Mi'kmaq quillwork has undergone significant changes over time, particularly after European contact. While quillwork was originally used to decorate clothing, baskets, and ceremonial items, the introduction of European beads and fabrics led to a shift in Mi'kmaq decorative arts. Beadwork gradually became more popular, but quillwork continued to be practiced by some artisans, particularly for ceremonial purposes and as a way to preserve cultural heritage. In recent years, there has been a revival of interest in quillwork, with contemporary Mi'kmaq artists reinterpreting traditional designs and techniques for the modern art market. Today, quillwork is celebrated as a significant part of Mi'kmaq cultural identity and is often showcased in museums, galleries, and cultural events.

Image Source: <https://museum.novascotia.ca/>

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Mi'kmaq Quillwork

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What factors have contributed to the decline of this art form?

- The labor-intensive and time-consuming nature of quillwork has made it difficult for artisans to sustain their practice, particularly in a market that favors mass-produced items.
- The decline in traditional knowledge transmission, as younger generations move away from rural areas and traditional practices, has led to a decrease in the number of skilled quillworkers.
- The availability of porcupine quills has been affected by environmental changes and habitat loss, making it harder for artisans to source the raw materials they need.
- The introduction of European beadwork and other decorative techniques reduced the demand for traditional quillwork, leading to a decline in its production.

Image Source: <https://experienceennoxisland.com/>



Thank You

www.savedyingarts.com