

ACM WONDERS

Suitable for ages 13 and up

ACM

HEADDRESS

Handcrafted in Kutai, a region now part of East Kalimantan, Indonesia, on Borneo, in the 1920s

Background Information

This headdress has a Garuda-shaped crown and ornaments suspended at the sides and back. Kutai is well-known for its gold deposits, and by the 20th century, it also had oil wealth. The gold used in Kutai jewellery is found in rivers and mines. Gold objects like this were highly regarded and reflected the prestige of royal courts and the elite.

Garuda is a bird-like creature of Hindu and Buddhist mythology. Its use here is evidence of the long transmission of Hindu-Buddhist influence in eastern Borneo. From the Majapahit period (1293–1527) onwards, Indo-Javanese ideas were absorbed into the coastal regions of Borneo and other neighbouring islands. Even after the conversion to Islam by the 16th century, the impact of Hindu-Buddhist ideas continued to influence the arts and cultures of these communities. They remain an influence today.



Headdress

Borneo, Kutai, 1920s.

Gold Crown, 15.5 x 21 x 23.5 cm;

side ornaments, length each 11.5 cm; back, length 44 cm.

Asian Civilisations Museum.

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin,

2002-00563

LET'S DISCOVER

You will learn about the techniques used to make this headdress, as well as the symbolism of Garuda in Hindu and Buddhist mythology.

FUN FACT

Garuda is the protector and king of birds, with the power to travel anywhere with great speed. In Hinduism, he is the vehicle of the god Vishnu. In Buddhism, garudas are beings with high intelligence and special powers. In both, they appear bird-like, or part human-part bird.

GLOSSARY

Casting is shaping metal by pouring molten metal into a stone or clay mould. When the metal cools, it becomes solid. The mould is then opened to reveal the object.

Forging is shaping metal by hammering. Bars of metal can be forged into thin sheets, which are then cut or bent into desired shapes.

Repoussé is a technique to create designs in relief on a sheet of metal. A hammer and punch tools are used to beat out designs from the back.

Chasing is the opposite of repoussé. The designs are hammered in from the front side, producing sunken or engraved areas of the design. Often repoussé and chasing are used together.

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LET'S LOOK CLOSELY

Use these guidelines to discover details about this object.

1. **EXAMINE** the object closely, then **WRITE** down the techniques which you think were used to make it. Use the terms in the glossary as a guide.
2. **IMAGINE** you owned this crown. **TELL** a friend the story of who you are and what happened on a day you wore this headdress.
3. **DESCRIBE** one of the traditional headdresses in your culture. What are some differences and similarities with this one?

CREATE AT HOME

Continue the experience at home by doing these activities. Don't forget to tag us @ACM_SG and we may feature your creation.

4. **IMAGINE** you are the craftsperson who made this headdress. The owner has requested for you to make a pair of earrings and a necklace to wear with the headdress for a special occasion.

DESIGN a jewellery set to match this headdress, making use of mythical creatures in Indonesian culture. **READ** up on some of these creatures online and **LOOK** up images of our objects at Roots.sg for more inspiration!

THINK about the symbolic meanings behind your design and choice of decoration. Can you **FIND** some interesting materials around your house?