

Basic Detail Report

Iwisa (nobbed sparring stick)

Date

early to mid-twentieth century

Primary Maker

Artist not recorded

Medium

wood, telephone wire, brass or copper

Description

Stick with diagonal lines of colored telephone wire and large spherical wooden end. Since the sixteenth century, metal and wire rods have been used as prestige items in Southern African trade routes. In the nineteenth century, sparring sticks and snuff containers became objects embellished with imported wire. The introduction of telephone wire in the early to mid-twentieth century opened up new color options for weavers. In isiZulu, induku is a general term for a sparring or ceremonial stick. However, a wide range of stick names are referenced here because sticks are used for different forms of Zulu martial arts, warfare, and play, as well as a wide range of community ceremonies, such as weddings, coming-of-age rituals, seasonal celebrations, and religious festivals. Different forms and decorations connote distinct functions. For example, when visiting a friend's home, a person carrying a sparring stick will leave his uniquely decorated stick outside to signal his presence to new arrivals.

Dimensions

33.5" x 4"