



## Adire eleko, woman's wrapper ("Sun bebe/lifting up the waistbeads" design)

### Date

ca. 1960s

### Primary Maker

Artist Not Recorded

### Medium

Cotton, indigo dye

### Description

According to Yoruba taxonomy, there are two primary types of "classic" adire: eleko and oniko. Eleko is a starch-

resist technique, typically using cassava or corn starch applied by hand-painting, stamping, or stenciling. Oniko involves tied, twisted, folded, or hand-stitched resist patterns, created with raffia or thread. If machine-sewn, this variation is referred to as adire alabare. The 1960s, during Nigeria's post-Independence era, marked a period of increased popularity and market expansion for adire. This era fostered innovations in design, techniques, and the use of diverse dyestuffs and base fabrics. However, by the 1990s, experimentation had largely supplanted the production of "classic" forms, which were deemed old-fashioned. Today, high-quality "classic" adire is rare. According to our regular collaborator, Gasali Adeyemo, adire of this caliber is no longer produced in Nigeria and is considered incredibly valuable. Adire patterns often take their names from dominant motifs, but artists have significant freedom to interpret or combine these motifs with others, creating a vast array of designs numbering in the hundreds. This adire eleko cloth features 56 dyed blocks arranged in rows of seven. Each row alternates between two distinct geometric patterns, with each row showcasing a unique combination. The patterns include circular, striped, dotted, rectangular, and squared designs, offering a diverse visual array. One particularly striking pattern resembles a fern, adding an organic element to the composition. This intricate layout demonstrates the versatility and artistry of the adire eleko technique.

### Dimensions

74 × 69 11/16 × 1/16 in. (188 × 177 × 0.2 cm)