

# LATIN AMERICA

## Panama



### Mola

Fig. 61

Cotton  
Kuna area, Panama  
c. 10"x12"

*Mola* means shirt or clothing and is made as part of a traditional costume by and for Kuna women. Some patterns originated in body painting, then were transferred to cloth when that began to be imported from Europe. The technique is termed reverse appliqué, since the cloth is cut, folded and stitched to reveal underlying colors. Birds, fish and abstract floral designs are common images in molas, though their creators draw on a number of sources and can include any subject matter or creature.

*Collection of Rebecca Martin  
Panama 2001-03*



## Animal Masks

Fig. 62

Palm fronds, natural grasses, dyes  
Panama  
Diameter c. 8"

Animal masks are made by Wounaan-Embera Indians in Darien Province, Panama. Among the animals they recreate are the jaguar, bat, and monkey. These are sold to visitors but are also used indigenously, worn by children on occasion, so that if bad spirits come they will not recognize the wearer. Masks like these are also hung within the house to protect home and inhabitants.

*Collection of Rebecca Martin, Panama 2001-03*



### Textiles and Carrying Bag

Fig. 63

Wool  
Bolivia

12" x 16" (top) 19" x 29" (bottom) 8" x 9" (right)

Two of these weavings come from Potosi and one from Sucre. They were produced by Aymara and Quechua Indians, descendants of the former Inca Empire. These men and women continue a tradition of woven textile design that incorporates images using pre-Columbian designs, real and mythological creatures. Birds, jaguars and horsemen can be seen in the two flat mats. The finely woven carrying bag has images of horses and human figures carrying baskets between them.

*Collection of Michael and Diane Friis, Bolivia 1995-97*



**Woven  
Pieces** *Fig. 64*

Wool, cotton,  
natural dyes  
Bolivia

Table runner  
10" x 48"

*Chuspa*, carrying  
bags for coca leaf  
5"-6" square

*Awayo*, carrying  
blanket 34" x 38"

These items were purchased from APSU, a cooperative of weavers, both men and women, in northern Bolivia. APSU is a Peace Corps project instituted to give the indigenous population the opportunity to receive money through sale of local craftwork.

The table runner, made of llama or sheep wool, incorporates images of horsemen, birds, and jaguars. Each image had local interpretations. *Chuspa* were used primarily for carrying coca leaf which was used as an offering. On ceremonial occasions, sacrificial offerings, coca leaves or wine were placed on an *uncuñia*, or mat as an offering for consumption by the deity. Worshippers asked for good health, or for help to remedy a current problem. The *awayo* was used to carry infants and other bundles.

*Collection of Ana Zambie, Bolivia 1999-2001*

## **Patterned Basket**

*Fig. 65*

### **Grasses**

#### **Bogota, Colombia**

Colombia is an ethnically diverse country inhabited by indigenous peoples from the Muisca, Quimbaya and Tairona tribes along with Latin, African and European compatriots. Basketry is one of the crafts that has long been used locally and is now exported into the world market. This intricate geometric pattern was created by first dyeing the natural material, then weaving it much as cloth is woven, with warp and weft of different colors.

*Collection of Char Thompson, Chile 1969-71*



## **Floor Covering** *Fig. 66*

### **Wool Chile**

This carpet weaving is typical of those made in the Temuco area of Chile, by indigenous Maputa weavers. Natural wool colors form the geometric patterns. “The Chilean government had a system of cooperatives and stores to support sale of traditional items such as this. I admired the skill of those who made beautiful things to help support their families.” –*Char Thompson*

*Collection of Char Thompson  
Chile 1969-71*