



Al Markoob

Other names:

Shoes



Change Image



Domai n

Costume and Dress
Traditional Shoes

COMMUNITY GROUPS AND LOCATION

Community groups

Worn by all Sudanese men from all states.

historically women also had a version of the markoob shoes but it is no longer as popular as before amongst women

One of the most famous regions for Markoob making is Darfur

Practitioners

Cobblers: old men and women and youth.

They also work closely with tanners, tailors and traders

Purpose / Use

Markoob's are worn as shoes but also as a symbol of status depending on the materials used.

Knowledge / Skills

Leather work skills are needed to make Markoob's. Especially when dealing with costly material such as leopard hide. The shoe maker will have skills to cut and sew the shoes together, while making sure the shoes are comfortable, minimum hide waste and right sizing.

Transmission

Markoob-making skills are transferred through the generational family skill transfer. which is usually by allowing the youth to support the elders as they make the Markoobs, they learn by watching them being made at a young age and as they grow older they start supporting and making their own Markoobs.

Skilled workers can also be trained in this trade, to learn how to cut and shape the markoob, how to work the leather and how to source the right inputs.

Tools, Equipment, Services

Leather, stitching machinery, needles, thread, rubber, and a iron mold, sitting stools, knives, scissors, and nails to assemble the markoob.

HISTORY

The skill of crafting "al-Markoub" is a traditional skill passed down from generation to generation. Those who practice it are known for their expertise in producing traditional shoes known as "al-Markoub." These shoes are made from various types of leather, such as cowhide, goat skin, reptile skins like lizard, snake, and crocodile, as well as hunting animal skins like tiger, leopard, and deer. This skill involves the use of many tools, cutting tools, wooden tools for hammering and molds, knives, scissors, awls, rubber, needles, and leather punches for punching holes. A comb made of brass, aluminum, or nickel is used for finishing, as well as a machine for weaving to obtain the skins of wild animals. The hides of goats and cows are tanned in traditional tanneries in general, and tanned leather is used in modern or imported tanneries.

INTRODUCTION

Sudanese Markoob shoes are traditional leather footwear, widely worn by men in Sudan. They are handcrafted from high-quality leather, often camel or cowhide, and are known for their durability and comfort. Markoob shoes typically have a simple slip-on design with a slightly pointed or rounded toe, making them ideal for the hot Sudanese climate.

These shoes are often associated with cultural and formal attire, worn with Jalabiya (a traditional Sudanese dress). The leather is sometimes dyed in shades of brown, black, or reddish hues, and artisans may add subtle embossed patterns. Markoob shoes are favored for their breathability and ability to mold to the wearer's feet over time.

They remain a symbol of heritage and craftsmanship, blending functionality with Sudanese tradition, and are still popular among different generations today.

Cultural Value:

Wearing Markoob shoes is a sign of cultural pride, particularly at formal gatherings, weddings, and religious occasions. They are also associated with wisdom and respect, as they are traditionally favoured by elders, scholars, and community leaders.

The shoes are also a symbol of status, shown by the craftsmanship and the type of leather used. where tiger and crocodile are considered high status symbols due to their limited availability.

Associated Practices:

Other leather crafts such as making of bags, keychains and other accessories.

Cultural Expressions

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VIABILITY

Threats:

There is a threat towards the passing down of the cultural knowledge to younger generations, from the shoemakers and their knowledge in achieving the right cultural design.

The Markoob makers are usually old in age, and the transmission of skill might be impacted due to the war. Due to the rise in cost of living issues and the high cost of the Markoob, there is lower demand.

The youth are also moving to more economical jobs that can provide a more stable income, creating a gap in skill transfer.

There is also a threat towards the animals and biodiversity, such as tigers as their hide is used to make the premium Markoobs.

Natural Resources used

Different types of leather and hide are used. Such as Tiger, Leopard, cows, pangolin and pythons.

Image(s) source :

Link(s)