

**C.O.W. Accession No.** 1989.4  
**Object/Work** kente (ken' ta) wrap  
**Creation Date** c. 1960-70  
**Artist** not known  
**Artist's Dates** 20th century

**Artist Nationality/Ethnicity** African/ Ghana/ Asante

**Title/Name**

**Classification**

**Physical Description**

--22 narrow strips hand-stitched together to form width: white ground with gold, maroon, green, blue; border of five strips; weaving pattern "Aheema Ntoma," Queen Mother pattern.



**State**

**Edition**

**Exhibition Loan History**

--*The William C. Mithoefer Collection of African Art*, August 26–October 5, 2008, The College of Wooster Art Museum; curator, Kitty McManus Zurko, research assistant, Gitika Mohta '10.

--*Selections from the African Collection: The College of Wooster Art Museum*, Ebert Art Center, Sept. 11- Oct. 11, 1998, Curator Kitty McManus Zurko.

**Related Textual Reference**

--Adler, Peter and Nicholas Barnard. *African Majesty: The Textile Art of the Ashanti and Ewe*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1992.

--Gilfoy, Peggy Stolz. *Patterns of Life*. Washington, D.C.: National Museum of African Art, 1987.

--label information from *The William C. Mithoefer Collection of African Art*, August 26–October 5, 2008, The College of Wooster Art Museum; curator, Kitty McManus Zurko, research assistant, Gitika Mohta '10.

Textile  
(kente)  
Akan  
peoples of

**Materials** rayon, cotton

**Measurements** 73 l x 126 w (inches)?

**Inscriptions/Marks**

**Current Location** Ebert

**Shelf/Drawer No.** textile rack box A

**Date Received** 1989

**Donor** Mr. William C. Mithoefer

**C.O.W. Accession No.** 2013.82  
**Object/Work** Cloth/textile  
**Creation Date** unknown  
**Artist**  
**Artist's Dates** not known

**Artist Nationality/Ethnicity** African,

**Title/Name**

**Classification** decorative arts

**Physical Description**



**State**

**Edition**

**Exhibition Loan History**

**Materials**

**Measurements** 60 1/4 x 39 3/4 inches

**Inscriptions/Marks**

**Related Textual Reference**

--written on tag, "Jofa \$160"

**Current Location** Ebert

**Shelf/Drawer No.** textile box E

**Date Received**

**Donor**

Ghana and  
Côte d'Ivoire  
20th century  
Cotton, rayon  
The College  
of Wooster  
Art Museum  
1989.4  
Gift of William  
C. Mithoefer,  
Class of 1953

Kente is a prestigious Akan ceremonial cloth woven on narrow strip looms by Asante and Ewe weavers in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire. The term kente derives from kenten, a basket, because of its similarity to the technique of weaving. It was then referred to as kenten ntoma, meaning basket cloth. Later the term kenten was corrupted to become kente.

The Akan people explain the history of kente cloth with a legend that attributes the origin of kente to the spider. The legend says that two hunters returning from bush hunting came upon a spider weaving its web. They were so fascinated by the extraordinary creative skills of the spider that they waited and observed it carefully. When they returned home they tried to imitate the spider's weaving skill and succeeded in weaving a piece of cloth, which was later shown to the king. In his admiration, the king rewarded the hunters and helped them to build a weaving loom.

Later, other families learned the art of weaving, and kente weaving became part of the Akan craft tradition. The Ewe people of Ghana and Togo weave similar cloth, which they call adenadu. Some Ewes also believe that the term kente was derived from the Ewe word kete, which means open and close in reference to the opening and closing action of operating the heddle pulleys when weaving on a narrow strip loom. In both Akan and Ewe communities, the cloth is used only for special occasions and not as ordinary everyday wear. In both societies, every cloth has a name and a symbolic meaning, and each motif in the cloth also has a name and symbolic meaning. Meanings usually reflect historical, political, spiritual, and social concepts.

In the past, kente cloths were reserved for royalty, the wealthy, and titled men and women. In recent times, however, the cloth can be worn by anybody who can afford to buy it. Modern technology is now being used to reproduce kente designs for mass printing on roller printing machines. Automated broadloom weaving machines are also being used to weave