



IRICK

I Remember Intangible Cultural Heritage

ICH DOMAIN 5 TRADITIONAL CRAFTSMANSHIP



unesco

Sint Maarten
National Commission



DEPARTMENT OF
CULTURE
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, CULTURE, YOUTH & SPORTS
ST. MAARTEN

ICH Domain 5: Traditional Craftsmanship

IRICH

IRICH stands for, *I Remember Intangible Cultural Heritage*. A project created by the Sint Maarten National Commission for UNESCO and developed by The Department of Culture of the Government of Sint Maarten. The objective is to educate the community about Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), and create a home for the culture of the St. Martin people to access, use and share.

IRICH acts as a vehicle for the distribution of the ICH. This resource is a database of information regarding various aspects of the culture of St. Maarten, is free, and intended for educational purposes.

Traditional Craftsmanship

The fifth Domain, *Traditional Craftsmanship*, sheds some light on some ways Sint Maarten people display cultural heritage through craft.

A drastically declining facet of our cultural heritage is our craftsmanship. It is attributed to the diminishing artform, is the lack of need and interest due to the mass import of manufactured tools and constructs previously built by hand.

Traditional artistry continues to survive in representing cultural heritage, more as an expressive artform than a vital craft.

When viewing the database, each segment is further broken down into categories of “*Thriving*,” “*Surviving*,” and “*Declining*,” based on if the culture is still relevant and used today; whether the element is known, but not used as much; and finally, if there is little to no daily practice.



“The cultural heritage of a nation or region is not solely composed of monuments and museum collections, but also of living intangible expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants...” – UNESCO



Fish Traps

5.1

Coal Keel

Branches of wood are collected, cut, and lined up in a large, often round hole. The hole is then covered with branches, bush, and dirt and lit and slowly burned for a couple of days until the charcoal is ready.

Declining

5.2

Fish Pots

These are made with wire and stripped wood. A frame is made in such a way that fish can swim in to get the bait but cannot get out. Pots are dropped in shallow water and emptied by fishermen every few days.

Declining



Coal Keel

5.3

Fish Traps

A contraption/device made of wires, rods, fishing-net, or other suitable materials with the purpose of catching fish alive.

Declining

5.4

Fishing Nets

Fishing nets and throw nets are knitted from strong twine by men and women with the use of wooden tools.

Declining

5.5

Kite-Making

Kites are made from newspaper or other colored paper wrapped and glued around a frame of twigs or wood strips. A tail to stabilize the kite is added, and with the use of a ball of twine, the kite is flown mostly on the beach or other open places. (See *Domain 3*)

Declining



Boat-Building

5.6

Boat-Building

The trade to build small wooden fishing boats was started as early as the 19th century. The wood used came from local trees but more often from wood imported from nearby islands. Drawings were made and the building of the boat involved the use of plywood and fiberglass.

Declining

5.7

Sewing Clothes

Today clothes can be sewn by hand or sewing machines and cloth is imported from all around the world. In the past, materials were imported, or bleached flour bags were used.

Surviving

5.8

Crochet, Embroidery, Patchwork

From young, girls were taught in school how to embellish clothes, bedcovers, and table clothes using cotton colored threads for crochet and embroidery and pieces of leftover materials for patchwork. Today, classes are offered for anyone wanting to learn this craft.

Declining



Crochet

5.9

Wood-Carving, Whittling

This is done by using dead wood from local trees. Men carved and whittled toys, utensils, and other household objects. Today wood is carved for souvenirs such as masks, walking sticks, picture frames, sculptures, and musical instruments.

Declining



Wood-Carving, Whittling

5.10

Doll-Making

In the past, dolls were made by using bottles for the body and rope for the hair. Today dolls are outlined, cut, sewn, and stuffed with sponge and then decorated with different types of threads, cloth, or beads that are used for the features of the doll.

Declining

5.11

Palm Tree Basket-Weaving

In the past, palm or straw weaving or braiding for baskets or hats was taught to women, mostly from the Simpson Bay



Doll-Making

area. The straw was imported, and palm came from locally grown trees. Today beachside vendors make and sell palm products to tourists.

Declining

5.12 Making of Musical Instruments [i.e. banjo, tr  s, marimba (marimbola), bath pan bass, calabash maracas, tambourine, conch shell horn, steel pan, wax paper, and comb, “corndoodle” (flute made from corn cob), church bell, drums]

In the past, instruments were handmade on island from large gourds, tree trunks, animal skin, oil drums, farm utensils, or conch shells. Today few people still make instruments from these items/materials.

Surviving

5.13 Rockwall Construction

Rockwalls were constructed after the land was cleared for agriculture. The rocks were removed, collected, and carefully structured in walls to be used as cattle enclosures, estate boundary markers, or dams to prevent mud slides. Today, these walls are protected as monuments.

Surviving

5.14 Head Tie

Headscarves are simply knotted on the

side or in front or back. They are mostly used to cover the hair during celebrations, rituals, certain daily activities, ceremonial purposes, or as a display of African pride. Today head ties are styled according to one’s taste.

Surviving

**Total Number of Major Items and Sub-items:
14**

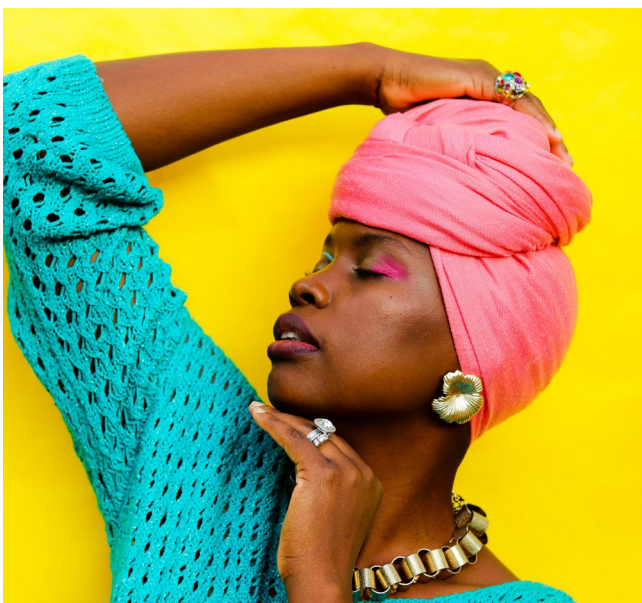
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Head Tie

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“Remembering and Preserving St. Maarten’s Culture”

St. Maarten endorsed the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) on May 21, 2014.

The Sint Maarten National Commission (NATCOM) for UNESCO, and the Department of Culture, with other selected representatives in the community, participated in ICH trainings throughout the Dutch Caribbean and Suriname. Numerous consultations were held with:

- Knowledge Bearers •
- Cultural Practitioners •
- Heritage Experts •
- Culture-Creative Professionals •

The national inventory list, as defined by the UNESCO ICH convention, is used as a resource tool for teachers, students, and anyone seeking accurate history and cultural customs of St. Maarten.

The five sectors, called domains, are broken down into the following topics:

- (1) Oral Traditions and Expressions;**
- (2) Performing Arts;**
- (3) Social Practices, Rituals and Festive Events;**
- (4) Knowledge and Practices Concerning Nature and the Universe; and**
- (5) Traditional Craftsmanship.**

Download the database, broken down into the 5 Domains, and more, online at www.irich.sx.

