

Exhibit shows traditional fashions

WASHINGTON (AP) — For hundreds of years, the people of Ghana have worn brightly colored kente cloth in traditional ceremonies. In America, the same patterns now appear on everything from sneakers to baseball caps and have become symbols of black pride.

In some ways, the popularity of kente has been a boon for Ghana. But these days much of the kente is made by machines, not hand-woven.

Silk thread has given way to rayon, and much of what looks like kente isn't woven at all, but just copies of the patterns printed onto cheap fabric.

The story of kente — traditional and modern — can be found in "Dress Codes: Urban Folk Fashions," a new exhibit at the Smithsonian Institution. Its aim is to make people think about the cultural history of the clothes they choose to wear.

"Dress Codes" was created at the Craft and Folk Art Museum in Los Angeles. But it opens first at the Smithsonian's Experimental Gallery, a space set up as a sort of laboratory for exhibit creators.

There, as visitors come and go, the museum's staff can gauge their reactions and change the parts of the exhibit that don't work.

The Craft and Folk Art Museum focused on four textiles often seen in L.A.: the kimono, kente cloth, Pendleton blankets and the bandanna.

"To decode cultural signs and symbols in contemporary American life we each need to look at our own tastes and traditions, in order to compare them with others across both time and social context," said exhibit director Marcie Page of the Craft and Folk Art Museum.

In a room where visitors can learn to knot bannanas, they also learn the history of the seemingly all-American fabric. It turns out that, like kente, it has its origins far away — in an ancient

Indian tie-dyeing technique called bandhanni.

Bandhanni cotton squares first reached a wider market in the 17th century, when the British-owned East India Co. brought them back to Europe. Europeans would use the squares to wipe up their snuff stains.

In America, they quickly became popular political mementos — with pictures of presidents and campaign slogans printed on the fabric. The first known political bandanna dates back to 1776, and shows George Washington on horseback.

The kimono, too, has wandered far from its roots. In America, it's more often thought of as a bathrobe than as ceremonial dress. But there are specific meanings behind each color, fabric and pattern of traditional Japanese kimonos.

According to tradition, for instance, young women can wear rosy hues while older women — especially married ones — are expected to wear colors and patterns that are decidedly more subdued.

Western reinterpretations of the kimono have also made it loose, billowing and unrestrictive. But in Japan, the exhibit explains, kimonos can be stifling and restrictive, forcing the wearers to sit ramrod straight and walk slowly.

The exhibit also describes how colorful Pendleton blankets were first designed to trade with Native Americans for their furs. The Native Americans liked them so much, the exhibit explains, that they incorporated the blankets into their own cultures.

"Dress Codes" is full of activities — from a dress-up area where people can try on clothes and then check themselves out in large mirrors to a loom where they can experiment with weaving.

It will remain in the Experimental Gallery through Jan. 30.

A life turned around, then ended for a coat

NEW YORK (AP) — Arlyn Gonzalez and Alex Ortiz were walking home from the movies, talking about the baby girl they would be having in two months, when two muggers jumped them.

Gonzalez didn't resist as one mugger pulled at her shearing jacket. The other mugger went for Ortiz's leather jacket. He fought the assailant, Gonzalez recalled tearfully Sunday.

"He said, 'Don't hurt her. She's pregnant.'" she said.

The next thing Gonzalez heard was two gunshots that struck Ortiz in the throat and chest. A third bullet whizzed over her head. Ortiz died early Saturday — his 22nd birthday — at a hospital.

The muggers jumped in a car with Gonzalez's jacket. No suspects had been arrested by early today.

Even with a bullet in his throat, Ortiz had parting words for his girlfriend.

"He was telling me he was scared to die, and to take care of the baby," Gonzalez said.

Ortiz was turning his troubled past into a fruitful future. Gonzalez, 23, recalled as she sat in the two-room basement apartment they had shared in the New York City borough of Queens.

A high school dropout, Ortiz served time in jail for drug possession. He got out shortly before he met Gonzalez last year. He was studying business administration and computer programming in college.

To give Gonzalez exercise, they decided to walk the mile back home Friday night after going out to dinner and a movie.

Then, as they talked about their future, Ortiz's ended, in front of a car-rental lot on a wide, barren boulevard.

Gonzalez said she'll tell their daughter "that he died for her ... that he loved her even before she was born."

'He was telling me he was scared to die, and to take care of the baby.'

— Arlyn Gonzalez, victim's girlfriend

Canadian ban affects Detroit paper

DETROIT (AP) — A Canadian ban on coverage of a sensational torture-murder case prompted at least three Canadian distributors to refuse to sell *The Detroit News and Free Press*, which carried a front-page story on the case.

"It'll be suicide to sell it," said Tim Quinn of Lake Ontario Distributors, one of the independent Ontario-based distributors who refused to sell the Sunday edition of the *News*.

Detroit Newspapers, which oversees operations of *The Detroit News and Free Press*, said it sent papers over the border without trouble. Canadian distributors refused to sell them or removed the front section to avoid arrest, the *News* reported today.

The case involves a couple accused of kidnapping teen-age girls, performing sex acts and then torturing and killing them. The wife has pleaded guilty to manslaughter in a plea bargain.

Ontario Justice Francis Kovacs has blocked the public and foreign media from his courtroom in St. Catharines, Ontario, just west of Niagara Falls, N.Y., under a law that

allows judges to order a virtual blackout on trial coverage in an attempt to ensure a fair trial. He also has restricted the coverage of Canadian journalists.

The *News* carried a *Washington Post* story on Karla Homolka's case and the upcoming murder trial of her husband, Paul Teale, 29. The story was based on interviews with people knowledgeable about what was said in court and on limited press reports.

A Canadian edition of *The Buffalo News* didn't contain the *Washington Post* story, editor Murray Light said, but many Canadians went to Buffalo to buy the U.S. edition with the article.

It was the same story in the Detroit area. "All these cars with Ontario plates were out there when I pulled up this morning, waiting for me to open the door because of the article," said sales clerk Deborah Willis at Millender Center Pharmacy near the Detroit-Windsor tunnel.

Some Canadians trying to take the papers back home were stopped by police at the border.

"This media ban is a joke," Kevin Hodges of St. Catharines,

Ontario, said after he was held for 40 minutes and forced to hand over three copies of the *Buffalo News*.

Homolka, 23, was sentenced last summer to 12 years in prison on two counts of manslaughter for her role in the deaths of two teen-age girls. Her husband awaits trial on first-degree murder charges in the slayings and on other charges, including the rapes of 17 other women.

Homolka has filed for divorce and is expected to testify against her husband. As part of her plea bargain, prosecutors read a long statement of facts agreed to by the defense, but the litany of rapes and tortures can't be published until after a verdict in Teale's case, the judge ruled.

Christina Bradford, managing editor at *The Detroit News*, said the case was of interest because of Detroit's proximity to Canada. About 24,000 copies of the Sunday edition, which combines reports from Detroit's two major newspapers, are sold each week in Ontario.

"To deprive our readers of a story to satisfy the Canadian government's laws does not make sense," she said.

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