

MODULAR MOUNT FOR PRE-COLUMBIAN TUNICS

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Wari: Lords of the Ancient Andes, an exhibition organized by the Cleveland Museum of Art (CMA), opened in Cleveland in October 2013 and then traveled to two additional US venues. Before the Inca—between 600 and 1000 AD—the Wari forged a complex society widely regarded today as ancient Peru's first empire. The first exhibition of this culture in North America, *Wari* included more than 150 artworks from more than 40 lenders in all major Wari media, including ceramics, precious inlays of shell and stone, gold, silver, stone, and wood, in addition to tapestry-woven or tie-dyed garments from one of the world's most distinguished textile traditions.

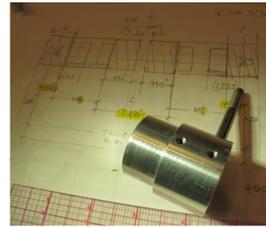
I. INTRODUCTION

The mount system designed for the Wari tunics needed to be modular and easy to install because it would be repetitively used as the exhibit traveled. It also needed to be simple enough to modify on-site with few tools. In addition, both CMA's exhibition curator and designer wanted the mount to be minimized visually as it crossed the neck slit. CMA's textile conservator traveled with the exhibition to install the tunics at the additional venues. Lender requirements determined the angle at which each tunic was displayed.



II. PRIMARY MOUNT

The mount consisted of left and right sides joined by a small-diameter rod spanning the gap formed by the neck slit. Two cylindrical aluminum caps with an archival tube between them formed each side (shoulder). The end cap protruded through the side of the tunic at the arm hole. A hole in the end cap with a set screw secured the assembly to a post in the backboard or wall case. To aid installation, two sharply pointed marking pins were temporarily inserted in the end cap holes and pressed against the surface of the backboard to mark the locations to be drilled. The mounts were coated with a water-based epoxy tinted to match the backboard fabric.



III. IN THE ROUND

For tunics displayed in the center of the gallery and seen in the round, a light-weight internal mount that traveled inside the object was constructed of paper honeycomb panel and archival tubes. Tubes were secured to the honeycomb panel with hot-melt glue. High loft batting was cut in an irregular shape (around the honeycomb panel) and secured to the tube with fabric straps and to the bottom of the honeycomb panel with stitching through holes drilled in the honeycomb panel.



IV. VERTICAL DISPLAY

For a small child's tunic displayed vertically in a wall case, the posts securing the tunic to the backboard were lengthened from the standard 5 cm (2 inches) to 23 cm (9 inches), thereby allowing the tunic to be suspended away from the display case backboard.



V. COMPRESSION FIT

A large feathered tabard also seen in the round was compression fit in a freestanding plexi vitrine. Because of the object's size and weight, larger diameter archival tube and aluminum end caps were used; the size of the center aluminum rod also was increased. Holes were drilled into the sides of the vitrine at an appropriate height. Receiving hardware—an aluminum disk with a threaded open flange—was inserted into the hole from the vitrine exterior. A threaded collar screwed onto the open flange from the vitrine interior secured this component. The center rod with archival tubes and caps spanned the interior of the vitrine. A snap ring at each end of the rod locked it into a groove in the threaded side assembly to complete the compression fit. A threaded collar covered the threads to aesthetically integrate the mount.

