

# LIFESTYLES

## African hats in

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON (AP) - Hats have gone out of style in much of the western world but a show of ancient and modern headdresses from Africa, now traveling around the United States, hints at a small revival.

The exhibit - "Crowning Achievements," now at the National Museum of African Art - takes note of a wide-brimmed straw hat from Bolgatanga in Northern Ghana.

"The shape and subdued colors seem to appeal to western as well as African markets," says the catalogue, "for the hats are popular throughout West Africa as well as in shops and street stalls in the United States."

Staff members of the Fowle Museum of Cultural History, which put the show together, took a look at the African Marketplace in Los Angeles. They came back with a baseball cap made of kente cloth. The brightly colored cloth originated in Ghana, but is now also made in the United States.

In the Los Angeles market the staff also found Islamic skull caps and a style called the garrison cap in the U.S. army. Both were made of the patterned, mud-dyed cloth of the Bamana people of Mali in central Africa. Others used patterns typical of the Asante people in Ghana and the patchwork cloth of a Muslim group in Senegal.

In Africa, hats and head-dresses serve many purposes. In some areas no self-respecting, full-grown man will appear in public without an elaborate traditional hat.

Other exhibits in the show are made not only with brightly colored African parrot feathers, monkey fur, bark, palm fiber, animal manes, wool, hide, clay and metal but also with imported cloth, buttons, mirrors, brass tacks and even pieces of chain mail that may have once been part of a knight's armor in Medieval Europe.

Western hat makers could get some new ideas from a local king in Ghana, Ejisuhene Nana Diko III. The catalogue shows him wearing his great bright war hat and matching shirt. The show includes a similar war hat. The ornaments - amulets covered with gold, silver and leather - contain passages from the Koran, which are said to provide the warrior with spiritual protection.

The exhibit also shows how western styles influence what Africans wear.

The late reggae star Peter Tosh from Jamaica inspired a wig now popular in the African republic of Zimbabwe.

From a traditional military organization in Ghana, another former British colony, comes a long cotton cap that flows down the wearer's back. The pattern combines the British Union Jack flag and the red-yellow-black tricolor of Ghana.

In neighboring Ivory Coast, a former French colony, the old regime is recalled in the shape of wooden hats carved to look like the pith helmet of a colonial planter or the kepi of a French gendarme. Some are lined with wallpaper of bright colors.

"Crowning Achievements" will be at the National Museum of African Art in Washington until Aug. 18, at the Hood Museum of Art at Dartmouth College, Hanover, N.H., Sept. 21 to Dec. 1, and at the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, April 22, 1997, to June 15.

## Hot fashions for back-to-school



PHOTO/ CALVIN FERGUSON

Fashionable students ready for school - (l. to r.) Lashonda Blakney, 10, brother D.J. Blakney, 7, of University Park Creative Arts School, Natari Morrison, 8, Starmount Elementary, and Jie Brandon Johnson, 7, Chantilly Visual and Performing Arts.

By Jeri Young  
THE CHARLOTTE POST

"Mom and Dad, can I have \$363?"  
If you have children heading

back to school, chances are you've spent at least that much school shopping.

This according to figures compiled by American Express. American Express

also verifies what parents already know - kids are brand conscious. The top apparel name was Levi's, followed closely by Nike, Reebok, and The Gap.

Fashion consultant Debbie Weisberg offer tips to save money.

According to Weisberg, this year's fashion trends run the gamut, but kids seem to be looking for style and comfort.

"Kids want to be fashionable and comfortable," said Weisberg. "The big jeans, chunky shoes are all about comfort."

According to Weisberg, today's clothes are comfortable and durable.

"I have two boys," she said. "Whatever can be done to clothes, has been done."

Weisberg suggests that parents look for polyester cotton blends which are durable and washable.

"Materials have changed," she said, "you can find quality clothes in polyester. It looks good and wears well."

Weisberg warn parents to stay away from shiny materials and synthetic materials which tend to need special care and handwashing.

The in thing for fall is "retro" - styles reminiscent of the 60's or 70's.

"It's definitely back to the 70s. Flared pants, hip huggers, floral dresses...form fitting knits in all colors are big for girls," she said.

Other fashion trends include bright "psychedelics" made famous by the "mods," as well as chunky jewelry in gold or

silver.

"Younger children pretty much wear the same thing," said Weisberg. "There is not as much distinction made in age groups for children."

Boys will also be able to make a fashion statement, said Weisberg.

"Boys have two big scenes, Americana and colored jeans," she said.

The Americana look, inspired by the Olympics and the nautical look of designers, features flags and an emphasis on reds and blues.

"Boys blue jeans are now seen as part of the fashion statement, so colors are hot," she adds.

Boys are also wearing baseball caps in all styles and colors and featuring various team sports.

Weisberg suggests buying kids basics and building their wardrobe from there. It saves money and allows for growth.

"Turtlenecks in all colors are great basics, as are leggings and knits, in black," said Weisberg. "They are stretchy, grow with the kids, are washable and durable."

Weisberg cautions parents to shop smartly and remember - kids will outgrow clothes.

With a little common sense shopping, kids can go back in style and parents will have a little left in the bank.



## Youthful look built on 1960s

By Jeri Young  
THE CHARLOTTE POST

School bound kids seem to know exactly what is hot.

"Baggy jeans, Nike, Nautica, Adidas, and you know, athletic clothes, tennis skirts and shorts," says 15-year-old Chyna Spool. "Daredevil shades in different colors to match your accessories."

Spool, a student at Olympic High School, also mentioned the "retro" look-clothing in colors and styles reminiscent of the 60s or 70s.

"Oh yeah," she adds, "backpacks are in, too."

This year backpacks and

brightly colored eyeshades are considered part of the total fashion statement.

"People match their shades and book bags to their outfits," said Spool. "Clear backpacks are in."

Other popular items include, iced nail polish in bright pastels, bold nail art and frosted lip sticks. Teens will also sport the usual collection of chains, including waist chains for young women.

Students also sometimes match their coiff to their couture.

"One time I wore a platinum wig," says Tamia Allen, 16, of East Mecklenburg High School. "I had on an outfit that it matched."



Spool

At left, beginner Keswanna Coleman, 5, Hidden Valley Elementary, and, at right, Tamia Allen, 16, East Mecklenburg High.

PHOTOS/ CALVIN FERGUSON



## It begins with right "sneakers"

By Jeri Young  
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Dennis Rodman, Grant Hill, Juwan Howard, Michael Jordan...

No, this is not the lineup of every NBA franchise owner's dream (or salary cap nightmare). It's a list of the shoes that have kids begging the parents for at least \$70, the lowest price point for athletic footwear.

And don't call them sneakers.

According to The Finish Line's Tom Scicari, apparel and footwear buyer, Nike is hot for fall.

"Specifically, the Air Much

More Up Tempo," Scicari. "It's our No. 1 selling shoe."

Ringin' in at \$139.99, the shoe is a top seller in local stores.

"They see it on tv," says Finish Line manager, Phil Renn. "Nike has pushed that real hard."

Renn manages the Midtown Mall store and has become somewhat of an expert on what kids are looking to wear back to school.

"We have done real well with the Converse All Star 2000," he said. "We've also had good sales on the Fila Muscle Ball."

The All Star, a remake of the

old Chuck Taylor shoe from when parents were back-to-schoolers, was reintroduced this year and has captured the fancy of kids.

Scicari says hot apparel includes logoed T-shirts, wind wear and licensed apparel, featuring local favorite - the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Renn also provided some insight into the mysterious land of athletic footwear.

"There are basically three types of shoe," Renn said.

"Fashion, functional, and price point. Kids are looking for fashion, shoes that match outfits."



Even uniforms won't stop all students from being distinctive with these options in athletic footwear.