

- **Where?:** Urabá region of Antioquia
- **Region:** Pacific
- **Material:** cloth



### Molas

Molas are made by members of the Kuna Indian culture, who live in parts of a mainland strip in northwestern Colombia and on the islands of San Blas in Panama.

Traditionally, molas are manufactured by Kuna women and no two molas are the same. They embody an entire philosophy and are a well-preserved tradition. Kuna women wear them every single day of their lives and are even buried in them.

Mola designs do not only reflect great natural and artistic wisdom, but also elements of a very original culture.

Molas are made by hand with reverse-applique needlework. Two or more layers of cloth are stitched together so that the design shows through openings in the layers. The design is inspired by shapes and figures from the world that surrounds them..

### The origin of molas

Molas have their origin in body painting (tattoos) that was transferred to cloth. They represent their cosmogonic thought, a graphic vision of a world full of color and anthropomorphic and zoomorphic meanings.

According to the Kunas' worldview, Babdummad was the creator of the universe and gave his people beautiful fabrics for them to depict their views and flora and fauna. The word mola is

indicative of the two phases in its manufacture

### The word “mola”

These sides are related to certain stylistic forms of oral literature. Just like the molas, the ritual chants of the Kunas are organized in stanzas and repetitions accompanied by slight changes in words, sounds, or meaning. The same is true of molas. The two sides of the fabric can alter the main motif, the color or the background.

“Women are the artists ... The colors that are liked and used ... are red, yellow, and a charming, brilliant blue ... They make figures of birds, beasts, men, trees...”

### Design themes



Mola accessories

The theme that is repeated in a great many molas is the labyrinth. The Kuna Indians believe that men, the exuberant tropical vegetation, and animals are reunited constantly through complex paths.

On the other hand, the appealing, colorful geometric figures depict mythical scenes, the creation of the world, and the flora and fauna of the region inhabited by the Kuna.

Molas are like pages in the book of memories of the Kuna, through which women depict their worldviews, episodes of oral literature, songs, poems, and customs.

### If you like molas, you may be interested in:

- Other handicrafts: [colombian textile work](#) .
- Activities: [sun and beach](#) , [diving](#) and [birdwatching](#) .
- Natural parks: [Gorgona](#) , [Malpelo](#) and [Utría](#) .

- Nuquí: [amid whales and fishermen](#) .