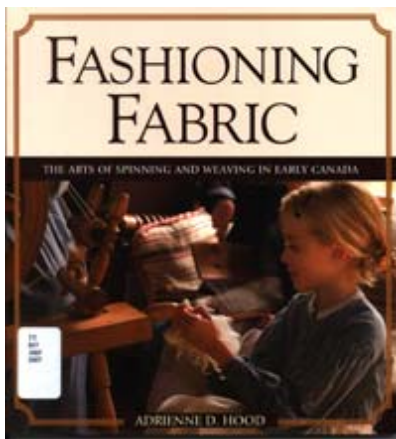


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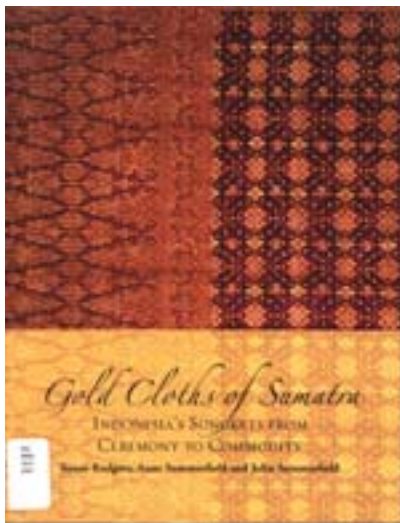
BOOK REVIEWS



Fashioning Fabric, the Arts of Spinning and Weaving in Early Canada, by Adrienne D. Hood. James Lorimer Company, Ltd, Toronto. 2007 93 pages. Reviewed by Janina Milisiewicz.

The book describes the materials, methods, tools and patterns used by early Canadian settlers to make items of clothing and household textiles. The author also explores the living conditions and the tremendous obstacles that settlers faced in their new surroundings. Fabrication "from the sheep's back to yours" is well illustrated by photographs from Upper Canada Village, Black Creek Pioneer Village and similar sites, where these processes are recreated today.

The final chapter follows the transition from homespun to commercial, factory-produced fabrics and from early, hand-crafted spinning wheels, loom and accessories to elaborate, water-powered mills. An epilogue talks about traditional textiles brought by later immigrants, such as Ukrainians, Icelanders and Doukhobours. The book is copiously illustrated and has a useful glossary, notes on sites of interest and a selected bibliography.



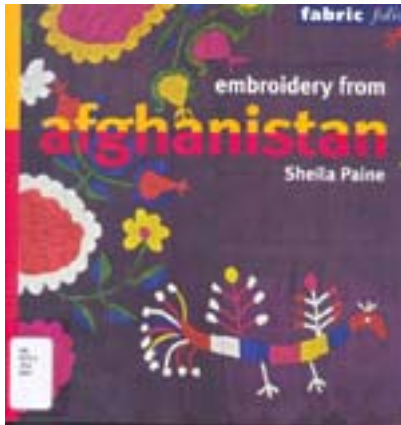
Gold cloths of Sumatra: Indonesia's Songkets from Ceremony to Commodity, by Susan Rodgers, Anne Summerfield and John Summerfield. Iris and Gerald Cantor Art Gallery, Worcester, Mass. 2007. 137 pages. Reviewed by Janina Milisiewicz. Songkets are a type of cloth woven with metal-wrapped silk or cotton threads. They have been used for ceremonial, domestic and trade purposes for hundreds in Indonesia.

In five illustrated articles and additional commentary on selected Songket pieces, the authors detail the history, structure and uses of these textiles within Sumatra and neighbouring areas. They describe materials and their sources, the equipment used, the spinning and wrapping of the threads, weaving and embroidery techniques, as well as the geometric and botanical imagery. We are led through the progress of these cloths, from their original ceremonial uses and significance as status symbols, to highly marketable collectors' items today.

The book will appeal to anyone with an interest not only in Indonesian textiles but also in the role cloth plays in the lives of people all over the world.

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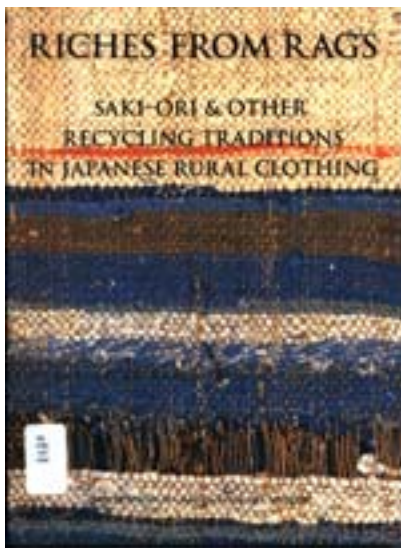


Embroidery from Afghanistan, by Sheila Paine. University of Washington Press, Seattle, Washington, 2006. 87 pages. Reviewed by Edith Strasser.

Embroidery, an important art for Afghani women, is now sometimes a woman's only source of income in a country torn by decades of war. In her brief but vividly illustrated folio, Sheila Paine examines the traditional colours, stitches and motifs of embroideries created by the various tribal peoples of Afghanistan. As she points out, war has disrupted the lifestyle and independence of many groups, but the adornment of clothing and domestic textiles continues to be a vital activity. Women embroider everything from their families' clothing, to storage bags and wall hangings, to pistol holsters and camel covers. Even when unable to afford fine fabrics, a woman can convert a cheap polyester garment into a thing of beauty.

Paine considers how the context of embroidery work has changed during three decades of war. One a young girl spent her childhood preparing for her marriage trousseau, presents for the bridegroom and textiles for her future home,. Now a married woman is more likely to purchase clothing, especially for men and boys. She may find rug and jewellery making more profitable than embroidery. Another change is the role of aid organizations, which help women set up embroidery collectives whose work is aimed at European tastes.

The vivid, detailed photographs reveal how exquisite embroidery continues to be made today. There is also a useful glossary.



Riches from Rags: Saki-Ori and Other Recycling Traditions in Japanese Rural, by Shin-Ichiro Yoshida and Dai Williams, San Francisco Craft and Folk Art Museum, 1994. 116 pages. Reviewed by Temma Gentles.

This book is of particular interest in conjunction with the Textile Museum's exhibition of "The Blues." Although the garments discussed in the book are made from a wide variety of fibres – hemp, cotton, nettle, wisteria, mulberry bark and others – virtually the only dye used is indigo.

The garments are woven, with most of the wefts rags cut from previously woven garments and household goods that are too worn for use as whole cloth. Some pieces, such as fishermen's coats, are comprised of bundles of many layers quilted together with shashiko stitching.

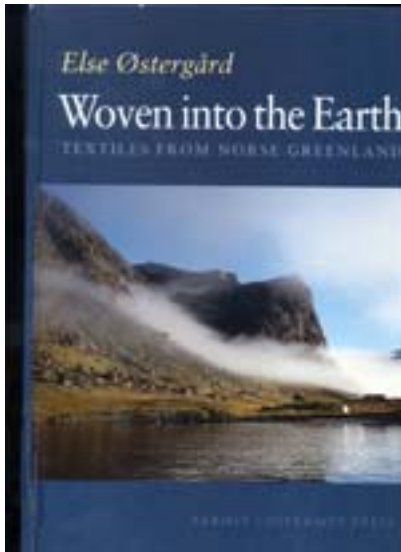
Some of the pieces tell their own story of the sometimes uncomfortable interface between utility and style: "When a yome-san (new bride) got married...she had to bring three sakkuri with her as workclothes. These were made by her mother as the yome-san hadn't yet learned to weave. Her

TEXTILE MUSEUM of CANADA

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mother-in-law would teach her." Some relate superstitions: "It was bad luck to sew up a tsuzuri on a day of your sign of the zodiac." All speak of limited means, but great persistence and patience.

The volume is nicely designed and produced. Illustrations are good quality, large enough to see details clearly, and organized around a single garment per page.. The well-written text includes information about the garment's shape, structure, materials, social history, as well as some delightful personal anecdotes that were obviously collected on site from the makers and wearers.



Woven into the Earth, Textiles from Norse Greenland, by Else Ostergard. Aarhus, 2004. 296 pages. Reviewed by Janina Milisiewicz.

Norse settlers first came to Greenland in the Viking Age, at the end of the 900s, and their descendants lived there for almost 500 years. The "little Ice Age" of the mid-1200s caused famine; and epidemics and conflict with the Inuit eventually led to the disappearance of these Norse Greenlanders. In this weighty, extensively illustrated and referenced account of the discovery and excavations of ancient Norse graveyards in Greenland, much is revealed about the lives and customs of the settlers.

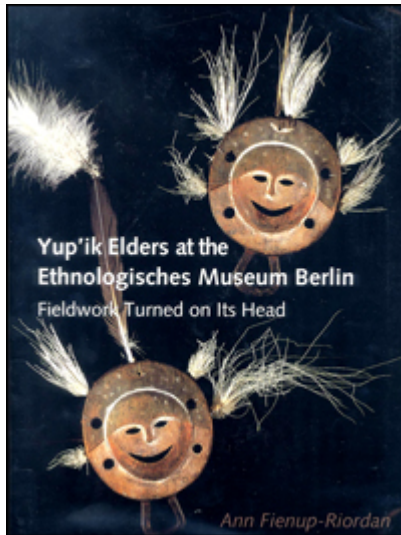
The 28 sites described, whose excavations began in the 19th century, harboured for almost a millennium, the many layers of clothing, which because of the scarcity of wood in this part of the world, had served as "coffins."

The sources of the raw materials, the processing of wool and linen, how thread was spun and dyed, are all described, as well as the warp-weighted looms and weaving techniques used. There are illustrations of the weaves found, details of fabric borders, selvages, densities. Garment construction, measurements, decoration, fastenings are described, as are sewing tools.

In contrast to the generally held view of the fragility of textiles, this book reveals that in a favourable environment they will provide a durable record of ancient cultures.

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Yup'ik Elders at the Ethnologisches Museum Berlin: Fieldwork Turned on Its Head, by Ann Fienup-Riordan. University of Washington Press, Seattle & London, 2005. 335 pages. Reviewed by Kate Regan

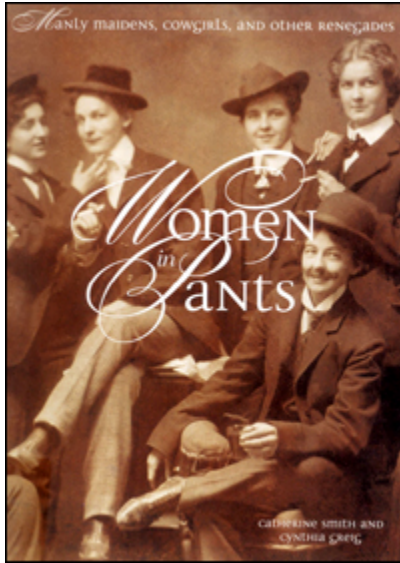
In 1997 a small delegation of Alaskan Yup'ik elders came with their translator to Berlin's Ethnological Museum on a quest to examine and discuss the museum's large holdings of Yup'ik artefacts. They were given full freedom to handle some 2000 objects, tell stories about them and demonstrate their use. Far from demanding repatriation of the museum's collections (as one curator had feared), the group was delighted that such a treasury of their ancestors' tools, containers, regalia, masks and clothing had been preserved.

Most of the collection was amassed by the 19th century explorer Johan Adrian Jacobsen, hired by the Ethnological Museum to gather tribal objects in the Yukon, Labrador, Greenland and Alaska. The Yup'ik are among the most traditional of American Native peoples, with strong communal memories of the old days, and thus the eight visiting elders readily recognized the significance of each artefact. While Jacobsen had labelled each object, it was the elders who brought them to life through animated stories about hunting and fishing, ancient legends and mythological monsters. They knew the songs and the correct use of masks for ceremonies.. Their testimony - haunting, funny, wistful and exceedingly lively - is an invaluable record of a way of life now rapidly changing.

Ann Fierup-Riordan, who accompanied the elders to Berlin, and has written several books about the Native peoples of Alaska, transcribed and translated the oral histories contributed by the elders and conducted extensive research into the objects discussed. Her history of Jacobsen's travels, his encounters with Natives and his sometimes dubious methods of collecting is an astringent look at 19th century European notions of anthropology. Her respect for her Yup'ik companions is invigorating. She includes magnificent photographs by Barry McWayne, an extensive glossary and a good bibliography

TEXTILE MUSEUM of CANADA

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Women in Pants: Manly Maidens, Cowgirls and Other Renegades, by Catherine Smith and Cynthia Greig. Harry N. Abrams, New York, 2003. 184 pages. Reviewed by Kathie Oliver

Since photography is a primary interest of the authors of this fascinating book, it is not surprising that it largely consists of a collection of historical photographs. This is not a negative aspect though, as these fascinating photos (150 in all) show women of the past as we've never seen them before. 'Women in Pants' chronicles the early feminists of the mid-nineteenth century onwards, who advocated 'dress reform' to end the constricting use of corsets and long heavy skirts. An early quote by a perceptive Marie Jones in 1865 that while a man's dress is "allowed to fit his body, a woman's body is compelled to fit the dress", aptly summed up their concerns. The women in the photographs buck the then fashionable mode of dress with humour and playfulness.

We are introduced to many women, ranging from the celebrated to numerous others who, despite their accomplishments, have not been included in mainstream history books. The celebrated include Amelia Bloomer who is less famous than the eponymous garment she designed, Calamity Jane and Ruth Law, a pioneering pilot. Most of them thought they had to dress like men to be taken seriously.

The women profiled here paved the way for women's rights in many areas of life. This book should be included in Women's Studies courses, but deserves to be read by, and delight, a much wider audience.

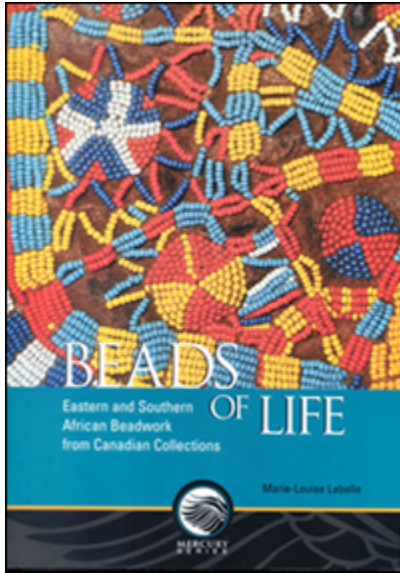


Symbolism of Chinese Children's Bibs: A Mother's Affectionate Embrace, by Christi Lan Lin. Les Enphants Co., Taipei, Taiwan, 2006. Reviewed by Susan E. Helwig

The third book based on Christi Lan Lin's collection of hand-made children's accessories shows bibs, collars and infant undergarments dating from nineteenth and early twentieth-century China. Embroidered in luminous shades of silk, each garment is a tiny work of art decorated with beneficent motifs for the newborn child: the lion for intelligence, crabs for a successful candidate in the Imperial examinations, peonies for wealth, girls at play in a rare celebration for a female child. The decoration of a simple bib or an elaborate cloud shoulder or capelet, in which petals of embroidered silk flow over the shoulders, shows the creativity of the embroiderer. Often these baby garments were a gift from the maternal side of the family at the infant's one-month banquet. Beautiful colour plates and detailed commentary in both English and Chinese characters make this book an excellent source for information about the traditional crafts of China. The two previous titles are: *Stories of Chinese Children's Hats: Symbolism and Folklore* and *Bonding via Baby Carriers: The Art and Soul of the Miao and Dong People*.

TEXTILE MUSEUM of Canada

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Beads of Life: Eastern and Southern African Beadwork from Canadian Collections, by Marie-Louise Labelle.

Canadian Museum of Civilization, 2005. 188 pages. Reviewed by Temma Gentles

The author, a social anthropologist, examines the history of beadwork in the context of complex traditional systems of social structure, symbolism and aesthetics. The book is generously illustrated with well-chosen photos from two principal sources: CMCC (who commissioned the volume as part of its Cultural Studies papers and to accompany the Beads of Life exhibition in 2005); and the author's extensive fieldwork in Kenya during the 1980's, where she clearly made comprehensive and subtle observations.

Although divided into chapters such as "Colour Interpretations", "Aesthetic Principles" and "Status Clothing" the anecdotes and interpretations expand well beyond the nominal topic. Therefore, the book is best read as a series of inter-connected stories, rather than an analysis of a particular theme. The author's insights are particularly valuable in helping us understand the traditional roots and meanings of a longstanding cultural activity. She points out that, since the 1970's UNESCO Convention...on Illicit ...Transfer of Ownership, there have been few recent acquisitions in this area by Canadian museums.



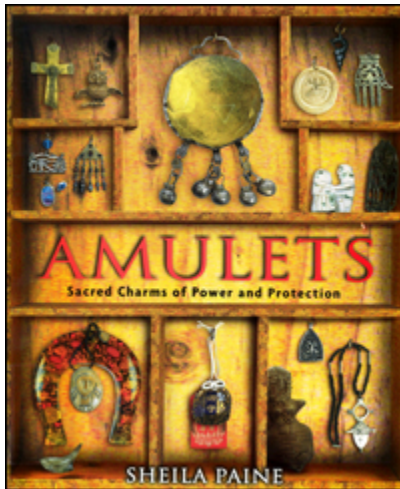
Art Deco Textiles: the French Designers, by Alain-Rene Hardy. Dan Monk and Harriet Mason, trans., London, Thames and Hudson, 2003. 256 pages. Reviewed by Susan E. Helwig

Alain-Rene Hardy culled manufacturers' archives and museum collections to create this definitive guide to art deco textiles designed by French artists between 1910 and 1940. His choice of more than 300 coloured illustrations, are lovingly reproduced by Thames and Hudson in this large format edition.

Hardy's expertise in twentieth-century decorative arts guides us through an era of dynamic design, during which themes, palettes and motifs constantly evolved. He divides the period chronologically, starting with the intense experimentation of "coloristes" who broke into brilliant hues (1910-23), followed by artists working in floral motifs (1919-30), to those who turned to geometric or abstract designs (1923-36), concluding with a final period of decline in art deco when taste turned to the neoclassical. Of special note are the many floral art deco designs by Raoul Dufy, the bold geometrics in Sonia Delaunay's "painterly" style and the modernist textures of Helene Henry, who wove fabric orders for the big design houses on her Jacquard loom. The book concludes with a List of Illustrations, including information about the manufacturer, production technique, composition and other comments of historical or artistic value.

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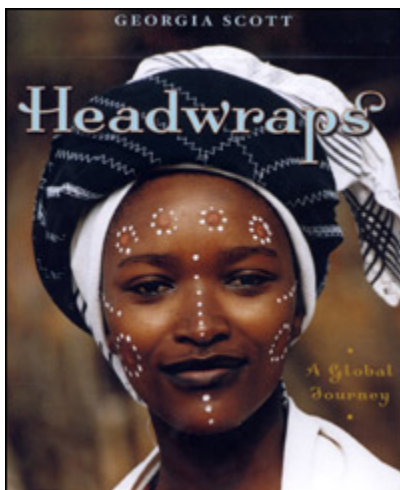
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Amulets, Sacred Charms of Power and Protection, by Sheila Paine. Inner Traditions, Rochester, Vermont, 2004. 192 pages. Reviewed by Katie Biernat

What is an amulet? Why are amulets used? Who uses amulets? These questions are explored in the book, *Amulets, Sacred Charms of Power and Protection*. By analyzing more than thirty subtopics, such as, "babies and brides," "travellers and hunters," and "hands and crosses," Sheila Paine details the innumerable ways amulets are utilized throughout the world. This book serves as an essential guide for those wishing to gain an introductory understanding of the use of amulets.

Sheila Paine is considered to be one of the world's leading experts in the study of amulets. This book is the result of decades of research on the use of amulets and Paine examines both historical and present day usage of amulets in cultures throughout the world. Although much of her information comes from first-hand observations, her research in museums and various printed sources further supports her conclusions. This book contains some of the most important examples on the use of amulets. It is a thorough yet succinct text and contains beautiful pictorial examples to illustrate the many uses of amulets.

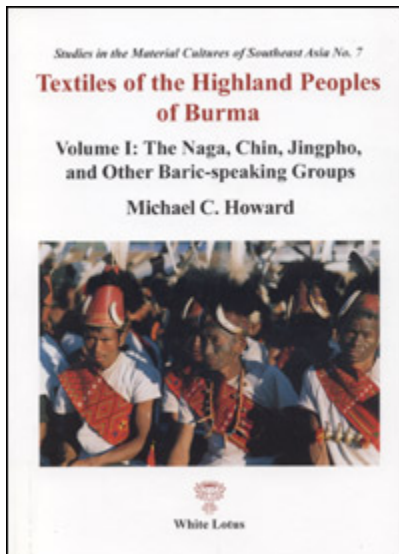


Headwraps, A Global Journey, by Georgia Scott. Public Affairs, New York, 2003. 209 pages. Reviewed by Kate Regan

When Georgia Scott, a New York Times writer, became intrigued by headwraps and headscarves, she discovered that no one had written about these garments specifically. Taking a leave of absence, she spent a year traveling through 32 countries, from Morocco and Tunisia to South Africa, Europe, the Middle East, Asia, and the Americas, interviewing and observing some of the diverse peoples who use headwraps as an important part of their wardrobes. In this beguiling book, she interweaves her personal journeys with astute commentary on the various ethnic rituals, histories and aesthetics she encounters. She spoke to men in turbans, women in chadors or in beautifully coloured and elaborately folded scarves, Chechen women, African men in splendid and complicated head coverings, Hmong women and Bedouin men, the Maya of Guatemala. She has documented the histories and symbolism of headwraps within each community she visited. The photography, much of it by the author, is stunning, and Scott's concise yet lively descriptions are packed with information.

TEXTILE MUSEUM of CANADA

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Textiles of the Highland Peoples of Burma, by Michael C. Howard. Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2005, Volume One 354 p., Volume Two 371 p.
Reviewed by Susan E. Helwig

This two-volume set, by Michael C. Howard, Professor of Anthropology at Simon Fraser University, is destined to become a primary source for research on textiles made by the highland peoples of Burma, including border areas with China and India. Volume One deals with the Baric-speaking peoples, including the Naga and Chin; while Volume Two covers remaining linguistic groups, such as the Karen, Upland Mon-Khmer and Hmong-Mien.

Each volume provides a comprehensive, illustrated, historic account of the blankets, skirts and bags woven by each linguistic group, along with more than two hundred colour plates with accompanying detailed descriptions. Prof. Howard concludes that a great deal of research still needs to be done to "do justice to the rich, textile heritage of these peoples." His monumental survey, superbly organized and richly illustrated, will contribute greatly towards that goal.



Textiles of the Wiener Werkstätte, 1910-1932, by Angela Volker. London: Thames & Hudson, pb 2004, hc 1994, 256.
Reviewed by Joan Johnston

The creation of the Wiener Werkstätte in Vienna in 1903 gave artist-craftsmen in Austria a unique forum in which to "produce hand-crafted objects to meet the needs of everyday living in all its aspects." The founders hoped to provide an alternative to the unsatisfying, poorly finished factory items which were flooding the market and, as they saw it, destroying every vestige of good taste. A large portion of the Werkstätte production from 1910 on was to be in textiles, both furnishing and garment fabrics, and for the next 22 years, the Viennese were treated to some of the most colourful, innovative and eye-catching textiles ever seen in Europe.

Textiles of the Wiener Werkstätte presents an excellent overview of this textile production with many illustrations: close-ups of the fabrics themselves, and full view photographs of how they were used, both in interior design and in fashion. The concise text is based on an enormous amount of research, not only from archival material but also from contemporary publications. The material is comprehensive, covering historical background, style, production, sales policy and customers. In addition the book contains brief biographies of Werkstätte artists and extensive bibliographical references. Angela Volker gives us a fascinating look at a time when textile artists were not merely permitted but actually encouraged to express their wildest dreams in cloth.

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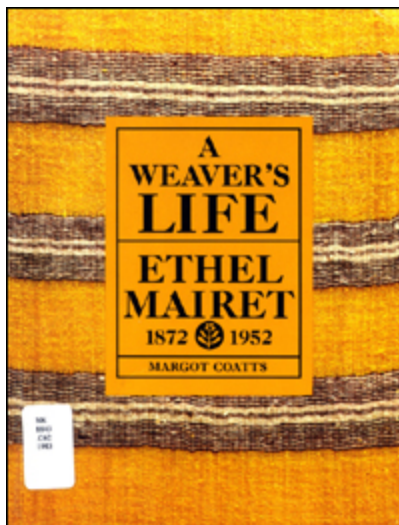
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Fashioning Tradition: Maya Huipiles in the Field Museum Collections by J. Claire Odland, Fieldiana Anthropology, New Series, No. 38, Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, 2006. Reviewed by Roxane Shaughnessy

This study is an analysis of 145 *huipiles* (Maya women's blouses) in the collection of the Field Museum of Natural History. They were collected between 1893-1995 from seven towns in the Guatemalan highlands (Cobán, Santa María de Jesús, San Pedro Sacatepéquez, San Antonio Aguas Calientes, Quetzaltenango, Comalapa, and Chichicastenango). The *huipil* is a traditional woman's garment that is elaborately brocaded by hand on a back strap loom. It is an important part of a Maya woman's costume or *traje*, and it communicates many facets of Maya culture. In this study, the author examines how changes in *huipil* fashion reflect the political, economic and social events in the lives of Maya women. Her method is to identify signature elements in the *huipiles* of the communities studied, and document how they have responded to changing conditions. For example, in the 1960's in Chichicastenango, the *huipil's* distinctive double-headed eagle motif was replaced with naturalistic floral designs, copied from European cross-stitch pattern books. The author provides a detailed analysis of the changes in the context of the social, cultural, religious, economic, technological, and political forces that can influence women's choices in *huipil* fashion.

The book contains 70 annotated colour illustrations. This study provides a unique opportunity to analyze a group of *huipiles* which represent changing styles within specific towns over a hundred-year time span. The Field Museum's collection reveals the deep roots of this style of dress within these communities, and demonstrates the *huipil's* dynamic role in reflecting changing conditions in the lives of the Maya people of Guatemala.



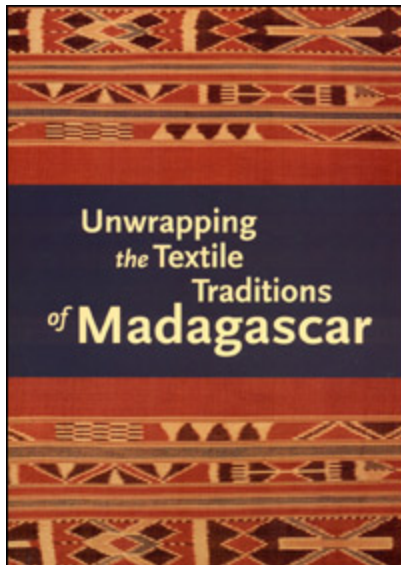
A Weaver's Life - Ethel Mairet 1872-1952, by Margot Coatts. Craft Study Centre, Bath, UK, 1983, 136 pages. Reviewed by Jane Milisiewicz

This biography tells the story of Ethel Mairet, a self-taught weaver, spinner and dyer who was also a teacher, writer, collector and entrepreneur. Born in Devon, England, she moved with her first husband to Ceylon, where she developed a passion for the textile arts. When she returned to England after the break-up of her marriage, she continued to learn and experiment in weaving. Considered a pioneer of contemporary British craft, she almost single-handedly re-discovered the tradition of modern hand-weaving in England. Through her teachings, workshops, writing and her intuitive use of colour and texture, she influenced many other crafts people. She travelled widely throughout Ceylon, India, Great Britain and Europe, always collecting textiles and adding to her deep knowledge of materials and methods. There is a substantial bibliography, a useful index and many illustrations of the places where she lived and worked, of her

TEXTILE MUSEUM of CANADA

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friends and family and of the textiles she produced.



Unwrapping the Textile Traditions of Madagascar, edited by Chapurukha M. Kusimba, J. Claire Odland and Bennet Bronson. UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History/Field Museum, 2004, 196 pages. Reviewed by Kate Regan.

Madagascar, an enormous island off the southeast coast of Africa, has been a crossroads for trade, cultural and technical activities in the Indian Ocean for centuries. There is no consensus among scholars as to when the first settlers arrived or who they were, but for 1500 years there were interminglings of people from various cultures who were sophisticated carvers, jewelers and weavers. Cloth, in particular, always has had social and symbolic importance.

This book, based on the Field Museum of Chicago's rich collection of Malagasy textiles, masks and other objects, examines not only on the strikingly beautiful patterns and colours of Malagasy wraps and ceremonial cloths, but on their methods of production and their cultural context. There are essays about and by the early twentieth century explorer/anthropologist Ralph Linton; descriptions of contemporary burial and reburial rites - in which cloth takes on an iconic importance; discussions of lamba (cloth for the living) and lambamena (cloth for the dead). The photographs of textiles made of raffia cotton, wild silk, tree bark are striking. Altogether this is an authoritative introduction to the history, aesthetics and cultures of Madagascar.