

Between the Sea and the Desert

EXHIBITION AT THE TEXTILE MUSEUM OF CANADA

November 21, 2007 - May 18, 2008

Curated by Natalia Nekrassova

Opening reception: Wednesday November 21, 6:30 – 8:00 pm. Remarks at 6:45 pm.

Exhibition Sponsor:



TORONTO – November 21, 2007.

Every thread has a soul – this Arab proverb is particularly true for the textile culture of Maghreb, the most northwestern part of Africa. From ancient times this **place of the sunset** (meaning of the Arabic word Maghreb) served as a crossroads for peoples and influences moving between sub-Saharan Africa and the Mediterranean. The rich and diverse textile art from this region (Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia) reflects elements of the many cultures that have inhabited it over the centuries as well as the varied and sometimes extreme natural environment.

For the nomadic tribesman living in the Atlas Mountains, the sedentary countrymen of the plains and the multicultural city-dwellers of the Mediterranean seashore, textiles have always been more than simple necessities of life. They were a **means of creative expression, and a way of recording life experiences and relationships with nature and other cultures.**

This rare collection also demonstrates the range of textiles shaped by the varied natural environment. **Luxurious embroidered silks** from the coastal cities of the Mediterranean show a cosmopolitan and urban sensibility with **Arab and Spanish influences**, while the densely woven shawls of the Berber peoples of the Atlas Mountains are a testament to the harsh winters that result from the high elevation of their territory. Technically demanding, these shawls can take **months, even years to create.** *Journey between the sea and the desert* and experience the many cultures of North Africa.

For this exhibition, the Textile Museum of Canada is showcasing its rich and rare Northwest African collection for the first time. This collection is one of the only and best of its kind in North America.

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For additional information, interviews or images:

Contact Beth Sharpe at 416-599-5321 x2239 or email bethsharpe@textilemuseum.ca

Textile Museum of Canada
55 Centre Avenue (Dundas & University)
Toronto, ON M5G 2H5
T (416) 599-5321 F (416) 599-2911
www.textilemuseum.ca
Transit: St. Patrick Station

Museum Hours

Open 7 days a week 11 am – 5 pm
Wednesdays 11 am – 8 pm



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PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

Family Day: Wintercity

Sunday January 27, 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Come and have fun with activities based on the exhibition.

Free with admission.

Curator's Tours

Wednesday January 30 and March 12, 6:30 pm

Free with admission.

Textile Seminar: North and Central African Textiles

Wednesday February 6, 6:30 pm

Enjoy a fascinating behind-the-scenes look at artifacts from the TMC's collection with curators Natalia Nekrassova and Roxane Shaughnessy.

Members \$12, Non-members \$15, Full-time students Pay-What-You-Can.

Advance registration is required, class size is limited. To register, call 416-599-5321 x 2221.

Workshop: Hands-on Henna

Saturday March 8, 1:00 - 5:00 pm

Learn how to prepare and paint henna designs on your body at this fun hands-on workshop. This activity will include learning about the history of henna painting and will appeal to adults and youth (12 and up).

Members \$50, Non-members \$65, Full-time students and youth \$40, Materials \$20

Advance registration is required, class size is limited. To register, call 416-599-5321 x 2221.

Performance: Arabesque Dancing and Music

Wednesday April 9 6:30 pm

Yasmina Ramzy, Bassam Bishara and Suleiman Warwar of Arabesque Dance Company and Orchestra will present an evening of Arabic dance and live music. From the glorious Bellydance to the spiritual Whirling Dervish, haunting vocals and intoxicating drums, the leading artists of this world renowned company will reveal the mysteries of Arabic art.

Members \$12, Non-members \$15, Full-time students Pay-What-You-Can.

Please arrive early, seating is limited.