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Draped, Wrapped, & Folded: Untailored Clothing
January 30, 2004 – June 6, 2004

September 30, 2003, Washington, DC —Though simple in form, untailored clothing can reveal a great deal about both the wearer and the culture from which the clothing originates. The Textile Museum's exhibition, *Draped, Wrapped, & Folded: Untailored Clothing* will highlight this unique blend of complexity and simplicity in a showcase of 19 untailored garments from Africa, Asia, and the Americas. The exhibition will be on view January 30, 2004 - June 6, 2004.

While some cultures prefer to make highly-tailored garments that echo the human form, other cultures favor rectangular lengths of cloth worn draped, wrapped, or folded about the body. Despite their simplicity in form, the design and decoration of untailored clothing can reflect a high degree of visual complexity and artistic expression. Pieces are often deliberately crafted with the garments' final three-dimensional appearance in mind. Decoration can occur at all stages of production, from before weaving through the final act of dressing. This produces a unique relationship between design and the final form the garment will assume on the body.

The prominence of untailored clothing within a culture can also reflect the deep significance placed on the art of weaving. By minimizing cutting and alterations, makers of untailored garments maintain the loom-woven origins of the cloth. "The manner in which the body is covered is a consequence of cultural traditions," says Textile Museum Assistant Curator, Lydia Fraser. "It makes sense for some cultures that invest so much artistic creativity into weaving to choose a style of clothing with minimal alterations to the cloth as a whole."

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In addition to exploring the nuances of construction in untailored garments, *Draped, Wrapped, & Folded* will also explore how clothing often communicates information about social distinctions within a culture. Some wrapped garments, such as a Bhutanese *kira* featured in the exhibition, can be symbol of cultural heritage and identity. Artfully draped garments with an abundance of fabric, such as Ghanaian *kente* cloth, can indicate high societal status. Untailored clothing can also reflect gender, marital status, and age.

Draped, Wrapped & Folded includes garments from around the world, including Bhutan, Burma, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Peru, and Tunisia. All of the objects featured in the exhibition are drawn from The Textile Museum's collections.

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Founded in 1925 by George Hewitt Myers, The Textile Museum is an international center for the exhibition, study, collection and preservation of the textile arts.

The Museum explores the role that textiles play in the daily and ceremonial life of individuals the world over. Special attention is given to textiles of the traditional societies of the Near East, Asia, Africa and the indigenous cultures of the Americas. The Museum also presents exhibitions of historical and contemporary quilts, and fiber art.

With a collection of over 17,000 textiles and carpets and an unparalleled library, The Textile Museum is a unique and valuable resource for people locally, nationally and internationally. For further information, call (202) 667-0441.

For more information or images, please contact Jeff Marn at 202-667-0441, ext. 17. The Textile Museum is a private, non-profit museum open Monday through Saturday 10:00 am to 5:00 pm and Sunday 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm. Admission is free; suggested donation is \$5.00.