



THE TEXTILE MUSEUM

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The Textile Museum Launches Educational Web Site
www.textilemuseum.org

February, 20, 2004, Washington, DC – The Textile Museum has launched *Common Threads: Unraveling the World of Textiles*, an educational Web site that encourages visitors to look critically at textiles as a means to understanding the cultures that produce them. *Common Threads* can be found at: www.textilemuseum.org/commonthreads.

Designed as an introduction to textiles and how to learn from them, the richly-layered site features an in-depth exploration of two objects from the Museum's collections: a raincloak from Bhutan and an overtunic from Guatemala. Learning is guided by the user's interests and can be pursued to varying degrees of depth. Hotspots, pop-up phrases, topic headings, and questions provide multiple points of entry for learning to look closely at textiles. A "magnifying glass" feature shows the textiles in considerable detail, and a 3-D module allows users to rotate a form 360° to see what the textile would look like while worn. A Teachers' Resources section, a bibliography, and a list of related Textile Terms are also included. Contextual photographs and related objects from the Museum's collections further enhance the experience.

Each textile can be explored from five vantage points: **function** examines who wears this type of textile, how it's worn and its overall purpose; **artistry** explains the textile's structure and how it is made; **design** details sources and meanings of designs in textiles and how they are produced; **environment** highlights the maker's and/or the user's climate and landscape, including the influence of environment on fiber choice and the textile's function; and **identity** reveals social and cultural specifics about wearers as well as the role of gender in producing and/or using the textile

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The *Common Threads* Web activity builds on key questions posed in the Museum’s popular Textile Learning Center, a permanent exhibition that includes a hands-on Activity Gallery. These questions – *What are textiles? Who makes textiles? and Why are textiles important?* – provide the framework for exploring the cultural factors that influence textiles and the technical aspects of hand-made textile production.

Funding & Credits

Funding for *Common Threads: Unraveling the World of Textiles* was provided by The Charles H. Stout Foundation and Prince Charitable Trusts.

Common Thread was created by an in-house team of Textile Museum staff. Project leader was Theresa Esterlund, Director of Education, other team members included Rachel Bucci, Director of Marketing & Communications, Cecila Gunzburger Cash, Curatorial Associate, Brigitte DuBois, Education Program Coordinator, and Lydia Fraser, Assistant Curator, Eastern Hemisphere Collections. Valuable support, evaluation, and suggestions were provided by a team of advisors, including content specialists, and museum educators. *Common Threads* was designed by Peel Interactive (www.peelinteractive.com) of Seattle, WA.

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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 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 more than 17,000 textiles and rugs and an unparalleled library, The Textile Museum is a unique and valuable resource for people locally, nationally and internationally.

The Textile Museum is located at 2320 ‘S’ Street, NW in Washington, DC. The Museum is open Monday - Saturday 10 am to 5:00 pm and Sunday 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm. Admission is free; suggested donation is \$5.00. For further information, call 202-667-0441.

For more information or images, please contact Rachel Bucci at 202-667-0441, ext. 42, or by email at rbucci@textilemuseum.org or visit www.textilemuseum.org/about/pressroom.htm.