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

December 20, 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 18 untailored garments from Africa, Asia, and the Americas. The exhibition will be on view January 30, 2004 - June 6, 2004.

While some cultures prefer highly-tailored garments that echo the human form, other cultures favor untailored, rectangular lengths of cloth worn draped, wrapped, or folded about the body. By minimizing cutting and alterations, makers of untailored garments maintain the structural and visual origins of the cloth. This is often a reflection of a deep cultural significance placed on textiles. "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 textiles to choose a style of clothing with minimal alterations to the cloth as a whole."

Untailored clothing lends itself to astounding variety and sophistication. *Draped, Wrapped, & Folded* explores how its significance extends beyond the practical to communicate multifaceted messages. The manner in which an untailored garment is worn and decorated can be used to convey social distinctions such as age, rank, gender, status, group affiliation, and spiritual significance. For example, artfully draped garments with an abundance of fabric, such as Ghanaian *kente* cloth, can indicate societal status. Similarly, the size and elaboration of an Indian woman's *sari* can reveal her family's wealth, while the manner in which the *sari* is worn is indicative of her regional associations.

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In some cultures the significance of the clothing is so powerful, such as the *lamba* of Madagascar, that it can stand in for a person during certain ceremonies and rituals.

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.