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Preface- 1992

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Preface

In choosing the theme "Textiles in Daily Life" for its third biennial symposium, the Textile Society of America has provided access to an intimate view of textiles - the way in which textiles touch the lives of everyone, from rich to poor, from East to West, from past to present, from birth to death. The theme has provided a showcase for the diversity of disciplines, approaches, and sources of information which characterize our membership and which energize our organization.

It was only fitting that papers on Japanese textiles began and ended the symposium, in tribute to our host - the Seattle Art Museum - and its outstanding Japanese collection, part of which was on display in conjunction with the symposium. The remaining presentations of the symposium explored the connection between textiles and daily life in a variety of formats and through very specific examples. Some papers were presented on panels which elaborated the theme. For example, two panels, one involving historic documents, another, archaeological textiles, provided unique perspectives on daily life of the past. Comprehensive coverage of contemporary Moroccan textiles was provided by another four-member panel. The daily life of textile artisans and the way textiles are affected by and are reflections of social change were the topics of two other panels. Videos provided vivid accounts of textiles in daily life in two presentations and an artist, Karen Jenson Rutherford, displayed her own "Fragments of Everyday Life," the first fiber art to be displayed at a TSA symposium.

In sum, the emphasis on daily life fostered a highly contextualized look at textiles, a very intimate view of the relationship of people and textiles. Emerging from the symposium was an underlying, unifying theme: the widespread fondness for and preoccupation with transforming fiber and cloth into a socially meaningful form. We learned that "Textiles as a Daily Obsession," to borrow Elayne Zorn's title, can be manifested in many ways - even among those of us whose obsession is researching textiles. Like the subjects of our research, TSA members are identified, brought together, and bound by textiles.

Together, the papers presented at the symposium and now gathered into this volume present a whole which is indeed larger than the sum of its fascinating parts.

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Conference Program Co-Chairs