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THREADS OF TIME Handmade Textiles for Weddings in Fez, Morocco

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Royal Ontario Museum

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VIDEO
THREADS OF TIME
Handmade Textiles for Weddings in Fez, Morocco

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Handmade textiles have been vitally important in many traditional societies where they achieved cultural, symbolic, and economic significance. Yet today, comparatively little urban production survives except in Fez, Morocco, where an astonishing variety of age-old handmade textile traditions exists, based on local demand especially for weddings.

This video documentary provides a rare opportunity to see the making and use of eight different types of fabrics and clothing, to meet artisans, merchants and consumers, and to attend a wedding where handmade fabrics symbolize regional pride. Among the woven, embroidered, and trimming fabrics is one loom of exceptional international significance. Elaborately patterned textiles are still woven on huge drawlooms, skillfully operated by two men, just as they were for more than one thousand years until replaced by jacquard looms. The ancient drawloom is actually an early computer wherein a weave structure (program) is tied on for continuous use and designs (files) are tied on any time and stored for retrieval when needed.

This 26 minute video is designed for educational institutions, individuals, and fiber artists. Anyone interested in textiles & costumes, anthropology, material culture, art history, and Middle Eastern & North African Studies will be impressed. The video was produced from fifty-five hours of video footage, twenty-one interviews, and three fieldwork trips by Louise W. Mackie, Project Director, Susan Schaeffer Davis, Anthropologist, Frieda Sorber & Lotus Stack, Textile Scholars, and Mark Stanley, Director of Photography.

Publications on Fez by the fieldwork team include: Louise W. Mackie, "The Threads of Time in Fez, Morocco," *Rotunda*, 24:3 (1991): 18-23; Louise W. Mackie, "New on Old, Handmade Textiles in Fez," *Hali*, 66 (1992): 88-93; Louise W. Mackie, "Pattern Books for Drawloom Weaving in Fes, Morocco," and Frieda Sorber & Lotus Stack, "A 20th Century Moroccan Drawloom Fabric," *Bulletin du CIETA*, 70 (1992): 169-185; Louise W. Mackie, Frieda Sorber, Lotus Stack, Susan S. Davis, "Textiles in the Everyday Life of Artisans, Merchants, and Consumers of Fez, Morocco," *Textiles in Daily Life, Proceedings of the Third Biennial Symposium of the Textile Society of America*, (1992): 9-49.