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## Preface - *Contact, Crossover, Continuity* - 1994

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## PREFACE

The Fourth Biennial Symposium of the Textile Society of America, Inc. was hosted by the Fowler Museum of Cultural History, University of California, Los Angeles, California, on September 22-24, 1994. The papers addressed a broad theme which was chosen in order to accommodate the diverse interests of members. The Proceedings contains the thirty papers and two abstracts of papers presented at the symposium, plus a video script, and a list of the two hundred and forty participants.

*Contact, Crossover, Continuity* highlights the causes and effects of change on textiles around the world. The *Proceedings* provides an opportunity to identify and evaluate numerous external influences which cause textiles to change. Subsequently, these textiles continue in an altered form, usually with new significance. The transformation process often features creativity which, therefore, becomes an additional theme.

The papers address cultures around the world and extend in time from the fourth century B.C. into the future. They include a wide variety of artistic styles, technical structures, and cultural significance.

The most common thread in addressing the theme is the role of cloth as communicator. Cloth serves to communicate ethnic identity, personal status and legitimacy as well as personal and political power. Cloth also functions as a visual marker of historical traditions, and even assumes magical qualities. The fabrics and costume items, whether imported or indigenous, undergo change that endows them with a new cultural significance and meaning and affects their appearance, production, or function. Altogether, the variety of factors affecting change, the varied means of and reasons for their assimilation, and their subsequent significance underscore the fundamental importance of cloth.

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