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THREADS OF TIME Handmade Textiles for Weddings in Fez, Morocco

Louise W. Mackie
Royal Ontario Museum

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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 100m 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.