



African Textiles Today

Chris Spring

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African Textiles Today illustrates how African history is read, told, and recorded in cloth.

All artifacts or works of art hold within them stories that range far beyond the time of their creation or the lifetime of their creator, and African textiles are patterned with these hidden histories. In Africa, cloth may be used to memorialize or commemorate something - an event, a person, a political cause - which in other parts of the world might be written down in detail or recorded by a plaque or monument. History in Africa can be read, told, and recorded in cloth.

Making and trading numerous types of cloth have been vital elements in African life and culture for at least two millennia, linking different parts of the continent with each other and the rest of the world. Africa's long engagement with the peoples of the Mediterranean and the islands of the Atlantic and Indian Oceans provides a story of change and continuity. *African Textiles Today* shows how ideas, techniques, materials, and markets have adapted and flourished, and how the dynamic traditions in African textiles have provided inspiration for the continent's foremost contemporary artists and photographers. With a concluding chapter discussing the impact of African designs across the world, the book offers a fascinating insight into the living history of Africa.

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