

MUSEUM OF INTERNATIONAL FOLK ART NEWS

NEEDLES AND PINS: TEXTILES AND TOOLS EXHIBITION EXPLORES TEXTILES AND TOOLS OF THE TRADE

EXTENDED TO JANUARY 4, 2009

Santa Fe, NM—Rare and never before seen textiles will be on display in *Needles and Pins: Textiles and Tools* selected from the Museum of International Folk Art's vast collection of more than 20,000 textiles. Spinning wheels, looms, needles, sewing boxes, and *adrinka* stamps, among many other tools of the trade, will also come from the Museum's rich holdings.

Needles and Pins: Textiles and Tools is as much about textiles and the many processes of creating them as it is the tools themselves. Often intricately carved or made of precious metal, they can be seen as works of art. The finished product of each process – weaving, embroidery, sewing/needle arts, lace making, non-woven textiles, printing, and painting, will be on view. The textiles on display are coming out of storage for the first time, making this a unique opportunity to see some of the museum's more idiosyncratic holdings. *Needles and Pins: Textiles and Tools* takes a comprehensive look at textiles and textile production from around the world with more than 250 items on view.

A needle will be one of the humblest items in the exhibition. Not an ordinary needle, it is a pre-Columbian gold needle from Tiahuanaco, Bolivia. It might have been used in weaving or to hold clothing together. Pins and needles had multiple functions in the past and were precious because they were difficult to make. In this day of mass production, these items taken for granted. But, in another time, they were not common and were a sign of prestige. Their value resulted in the creation of elaborate needles cases and precious pin holders.

During the course of the exhibition visitors inspired by the various textiles and curious about the means of their creation will be able to try their hand at such activities as weaving and embroidery, among others.

All textiles are made, embellished, and constructed with tools which started out as simple extensions of the human hand. The same processes done by the hand-operated loom, spinning wheel, and needle are carried out today in computerized factories. The scale has changed but the basic process and tool has not.

Needles and Pins: Textiles and Tools introduces many variations of the basic tools developed over time and by different people. Textiles and garments showing the techniques made with these tools also illustrate the dazzling variation made possible by combining human creativity and skill with these often simple tools.

Embellished textiles often express cultural identity as well as personal creativity. Certain embroidery stitches and color patterns are used by one group but not their next door neighbors. Woven motifs are given names and meanings that differ from one ethnic group to another. Cloth is used in ways that signify cultural belonging or separateness. In many places, a women's ability with loom or needle still demonstrates her worth as a wife and provider for her family.

The creation of textiles has inspired human thought and communication throughout time. In ancient Greece the Three Fates spun, wove, and cut the thread of life, determining mortals' destiny with spindle, loom and blade. All languages are rich in metaphor and expressions of textiles and their making. We talk of the "fabric of life" and "the thread" of a narrative story; of someone "cut from whole cloth" and the act of "weaving together a community." To speak of something or someone "dyed in the wool" is to acknowledge a true believer. Many European fairy tales incorporate spinning and weaving to comment on woman's role in society.

Textiles are all around us – we live our lives surrounded by clothing, bedding, and household furnishings, as well as in many unfamiliar settings. Airplanes and boats were once covered in fabric, hi-tech textiles are used in many medical applications, and some building materials are textile based. Even the cars we spend so much time in are filled with textile products. Making and using cloth permeates our lives even though few of us these days are directly involved in the process.

This popular exhibition opened on May 6, 2007. With the exhibition's extension most of the textiles are being changed so that the repeat visitor will have a new experience.

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The Museum of International Folk Art houses the world's largest collection of international folk art, with permanent exhibitions Multiple Visions: A Common Bond in the Girard Wing and Familia y Fe in the Hispanic Heritage Wing. Changing and

traveling exhibitions are offered in the Bartlett Wing, and exhibitions highlighting textiles are featured the Neotrogena Wing. Lloyd's Treasure Chest offers visitors interactive displays about collections and how museums care for collections.

The Museum of International Folk Art is a Division of the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs.

Information for the Public

Location: The Museum of International Folk Art is located on Museum Hill™, Camino Lejo off Old Santa Fe Trail.

Contact: 505-476-1200 or www.internationalfolkart.org.

Days/Times: Tuesday through Sunday, 10:00 A.M.-5:00 P.M. After Memorial Day the Museum is open on Mondays from 10:00 A.M.-5:00 P.M.

Admission: School groups free. Children 16 and under free. New Mexico residents with ID free on Sundays. New Mexico resident Senior Citizens (age 60+) with ID free Wednesdays. Museum Foundation members free. Students with ID \$1 discount. Single visit to one museum: \$8.00 for non-state residents; \$6.00 for New Mexico residents. Four-day pass to five museums including state-run museums in Santa Fe plus The Museum of Spanish Colonial Art \$18.00. One-day pass for two museums (Museum of International Folk Art and Museum of Indian Arts and Culture OR Museum of Fine Arts and Palace of the Governors) \$12.00. Group rate for ten or more people: single visit \$6.00, four day pass \$16.00.