

Madagascar from p. 1

The Legendary Lamba

Until around 1920, nearly all Malagasy women wove, and their handiwork—cloths of silk, cotton, raffia, banana fiber and beaten bark—was the island's most developed art form. Most of Madagascar's finest historic textiles are in museums abroad, among them the British Museum, The Field Museum, and the Musée de L'Homme. The Smithsonian also has several fine lamba, including two cloths presented to President Grover Cleveland by Queen Ranavalona in 1886.

Typical lamba are boldly striped, dyed with both natural and imported synthetic dyes, and often adorned with metal or glass beads along the fringed ends. For the Malagasy people, lamba served as daily dress, head coverings, ceremonial attire, prestigious gifts, and ancestor wrappings. Beyond their aesthetic value, lamba also had deep-rooted social and religious significance, and served as keys to the status of both weaver and wearer. This tradition exists today in a limited way, with the manufacture of burial cloths available in the markets. In the last few years, Malagasy weavers have begun experimenting with imported and wild silk, and the shawls, scarves, and home décor items they are creating are appearing in local boutiques. Our hope is that the current national exhibit of this historic collection will help inspire a revival of this beautiful art form, and will re-establish the status and use of the lamba in Madagascar.

The collection of 70 lamba being conserved is the only collection of 19th century cloth remaining in Madagascar since the National Museum, Queen's Palace, burned in 1995, along with many pre-1900 artifacts. This group of textiles had been housed in a former king's regional summer palace at Ilafy, and was recently transferred to the Palace of Andafiavaratra in the



Workshop participant stabilizing a lamba. Photo: Julia Brennan.

capital, Antanarivo, for preservation. It contains examples of all kinds of traditional cloths, including the very large or traditional lamba, loin cloths, ceremonial shawls, and funerary shrouds. Many of the textiles are silk, the most prestigious fiber in Madagascar. A majority are woven from the indigenous "wild" silkworm, *Borocera*, which is unique to the island. Several examples are of very fine raffia, beaten bark, reeds, hemp, and banana-stem fiber.

Training Approach

My job was to train a group of museum staff in the basics of textile conservation using this collection as our living laboratory; to develop and put in place a new storage facility; and to design and install a major exhibit—all in three weeks! Educating participants in preventative conservation was the core goal of the project. This included establishing guidelines for handling, cataloguing, processing, storage, treatment, and exhibition of historic artifacts.

The scope of work was extensive. My teaching methodology integrated principles and hands-on techniques, and was a successful model for training a range of participants. Thanks to the dedication of the project's 12 participants who each committed to a full-time, six-day-a-week schedule, the final results were impressive, and their work continues. Since the workshop, staff and participants have installed

the textile exhibition, implemented the storage room, and begun rotations and conservation improvements in other parts of the museum. These achievements are a testament to the project's sustainability.

We started with basics: the importance of documentation, good housekeeping, and detailed analysis. We then worked on cleaning and stabilization treatments, and the preparation of display mounts. Conservation and treatment focused on the wet cleaning and stabilization of about 20 textiles. We conducted scientific analysis of the dyes to determine color fastness and to select appropriate cleaning methods. We designed and set up a flexible outdoor wet-cleaning facility using available materials. We cleaned 15 textiles in this manner, including a wild silk uniform belonging to the 18th-century Prime Minister in whose palace we were working, a bark textile, and a rare ikat-patterned raffia lamba.

In the second part of the curriculum we addressed stabilization to secure areas of loss in the individual textiles. Students learned stabilization techniques, not "restoration." We supported holes and tears with patches of fabric that complemented the original textile, and secured other damaged areas with a translucent fabric laid over the damage. Using this approach, areas of wear and damage are visible and recognizable, but they no longer cause damage to the textile.

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YOU SHOULD SOON RECEIVE your copy of the 2004 *Symposium Proceedings* in the mail, if you haven't already. Carol Bier, TSA Vice President and Chair of the Publications Committee, oversaw the production of the *Proceedings*. It was a mammoth task, and she was assisted by several volunteers: Arna Margolis, Jannes Gibson, Carol Ross, Amal Abu'l Hajj, and Lydia Fraser formatted the papers with the support of The Textile Museum staff, Sumru Krody, Erin Roberts, and Richard Timpson; Jamy Sheridan and Peter Fitz served as pro bono computer consultants; Publications committee members Ashley Callahan, Lisa Kriner, Mary Mallia, Karen Searle, and Laura Strand also lent their support with formatting, proofing and other tasks.. On behalf of everyone involved with TSA, I would like to thank them all for their time and talent. We ask a lot of our volunteers and Board members at times, and this was one of those projects. I am sincerely grateful to everyone involved.

CD Format

This will be the second time that we have published the *Proceedings* in CD-ROM format. The CD is packed with images and, for the first time, includes a summary of the keynote address by Jack Lenor Larsen and the submitted papers from members of the keynote panel. While the CD format has many benefits, we are aware that some of our members have been unhappy with the change. While the CD presents new ways of searching

through the publication, and its lower cost allows us to provide color images, it is not the same as holding a weighty tome in the hand. There is also the issue of longevity, due to rapidly changing technology. One of the greatest drawbacks from my perspective is that the CD is very easy to lose—I'm on my second copy at this point, and not really sure where that one is.

When the Board originally voted to change the format, we agreed to review its success or lack thereof after four years. Carol, with the members of the Publications Committee, will begin that process this year. Included on the CD is a brief evaluation. I encourage everyone to fill it out and send it back to us. Your opinions will help us greatly as we begin to evaluate the *Proceedings* format along with our publication program as a whole. This is especially important, considering ongoing advances in digital technology and the increasing costs of printing. You'll hear more on this subject in the future.

2006 Plans

At the same time that we are wrapping up the 2004 Symposium, we are beginning preparations for the 2006 Symposium in Toronto. I visited the city for the first time last week and met with Symposium co-chairs Nataley Nagy, who will coordinate the site logistics, and Fran Dorsey, who will oversee the program. They and a group of enthusiastic volunteers are putting together what looks like a "diverse" and exciting program. In this newsletter you will find the *Call for Papers* that defines the theme of the conference and provides rules for submission. While the theme, *Textile Narratives and Conversations*, speaks to how objects can inform, one of the sub-themes is diversity, and Toronto, with its vibrant multi-ethnic population, is an appropriate setting. The conference will be held at Harbourfront, a multi-cultural arts center

located on Lake Ontario. Harbourfront is co-sponsoring the symposium and will provide what should be a unique venue, with open craft studios, theaters, galleries, a shop and restaurants, all onsite. I encourage you all to think about submitting a proposal. The real strength of TSA Symposia has always been the high quality of the papers—which, of course, only reflects the quality of the membership.

Board Meeting Update

Before closing this letter, I ought to report on the most recent board meeting. The board met in February at Berea College in Kentucky. Lisa Kriner, newly elected Internal Relations Director, and Assistant Professor of Art at Berea, hosted the meeting. This was the first time we put our new committee structure into effect. The day before the complete Board gathered, the committees met to begin addressing long-standing issues and new priorities established in the long-range plan. The committees that are now active include Finance, Awards, Publications, and Programming. Soon a Nominations Committee will be appointed to organize the Board elections that will take place next spring. This new structure proved very effective and allowed us to move quickly through a full agenda.

The Publications Committee led by Carol Bier brought several recommendations to the Board regarding the *Proceedings*. They also recommended that we begin a reassessment of our publications program, both print and digital. This reassessment will occur during the next year, and will include a look at the *Membership Directory*, *Bibliography*, *Newsletter*, *Proceedings*, *Listserve*, and *Website*. The committee encourages members to send bibliographic citations to Mary Mallia at The Textile Museum for inclusion in next year's *Bibliography*. (See p. 6.)

The Programming Committee co-chaired by Bobbie Sumberg and Margo Mensing met to address Study Tours and Workshops. Bobbie Sumberg oversees the Study Tour program, and it was decided to focus our energy on one Study Tour a year. A representative of TSA will accompany each trip to act as liaison with the local communities and deal with any unforeseen circumstances that might arise. A tour to the American Southwest to study basketry was proposed and approved. It will take place April 16-24, 2006. You'll find a preview of this tour on page 6.

Several workshops have been proposed. Joanne Ingersoll is exploring a workshop that will create a forum for a discussion on teaching the history of textiles. More information will be forthcoming. One of the most exciting workshops now under development is a course for non-specialists on fibers and textile structures. A committee composed of Désirée Koslin, Denyse Montegut, Margaret Ordoñez, and Sandra Sardjono is working on this course. It would be offered by TSA to those who encounter textiles in their work, but do not have an in-depth background on the subject, such as curators in historic houses and small museums, and academics—economists, archeologists, anthropologists, etc. We hope to run a trial program prior to the Toronto Symposium in 2006.

The Awards Committee is chaired by Mary Dusenbury who graciously agreed to serve in this capacity at a time when she could be resting on her laurels. The committee made a series of recommendations to the board, and I am delighted to report that for the 2006 Symposium an additional \$1,000 will be available to support speakers' expenses. Those interested in applying for financial aid should follow the instructions provided in the *Call for Papers*. We will also

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award five student/new professional scholarships that will cover Symposium registration expenses. The Symposium brochure will include the application procedures for these scholarships.

Other TSA Business

During the meeting, the board renewed TSA's contracts with Boyer Management Services for another year. Both Kim Righi and Kaye Boyer have been invaluable in dealing with membership needs and answering the many questions put to them by the Board. I would like to thank and acknowledge them both here. We also renewed our contract with Marinpro to continue as our web master. Both Thomas Mitchell and Dory Clay have been doing a wonderful job for us with **Ashley Callahan's** help. The fact that the Website manages to stay up-to-date is a tribute to the three of them, and we are very grateful for all their hard work.

Finances were also discussed, and the annual budget was approved. **Pat Crews**, TSA treasurer and chair of the Finance Committee, also reported on a telephone conference call the committee held earlier in the year. **Paul Marcus**, a new TSA member and Capital Management consultant has agreed to advise us, and is now drafting an investment policy. He will help us invest our resources so that we can continue to support all of our new initiatives, awards, and scholarships. The issue of reimbursing Board members for out-of-pocket travel expenses was also discussed, and it was decided not to pursue it at this time.

It was a busy meeting, and there is much to look forward to in the future. We will do our best to keep you all informed, and, if you'd like to be more involved in the future of the organization, please let us know.

— **Pam Parmal**
TSA President



Patricia Cheesman presented "A Review of Lao Textiles Studies" at the International Workshop on Southeast Asian Arts at the Palace Museum, Taiwan, Apr. 1-13. Patricia will also speak on "Lao-Tai Spirit Skirts" at the Southeast Asian Textiles conference in Bangkok in August, sponsored by the Jim Thompson Foundation. She will show a fine range of textiles from her collection in the exhibition, "Cosmic Connections: Shamanic and Buddhist Textiles of Laos" at the Jim Thompson Centre for Textiles and the Arts, Jul. 13-Aug. 31. patstudi@loxinfo.co.th

Sonya Clark received two awards from the University of Wisconsin, Madison: The Emily Mead Baldwin Bascom Professorship in Creative Arts for 2004-2006, and the H.I. Romnes Award, presented for a recently-tenured faculty member's exemplary scholarship, teaching and service. She was also recently nominated for the RISD Athena Emerging Designer Award. syncarlark@facstaff.wisc.edu

"Nightlife," a wedge weave tapestry by **Deborah Corsini**, was recently purchased by the US State Department, and will be featured in the collection of a new US Embassy in Sofia, Bulgaria. Deborah's wedge weaves were included in "Hand Crafted" at Rocky Mount Arts Center, Rocky Mount, NC, Jan. 8-Feb. 20; and "Materials: Hard & Soft," Center for Visual Arts, Denton, TX, Jan. 28-Mar. 20. Her work can be seen this summer in "Fiber Directions" at

Wichita Center for the Arts, KS, May 6-Jun. 19; "Fiber Celebration" at Longmont Museum & Cultural Center, CO, May 7-Jul. 17; "Tapestry Weavers West Celebrates 20 Years," at Nexus Gallery, Berkeley, CA, Jun. 15-28, and at San Jose Museum of Quilts and Textiles, May 31-Aug. 14. zcorsini@pacbell.net

Jane Hoffman will teach tapestry workshops at Northland Pioneer College, Springerville, AZ, May 7-8, and at the Intermountain Weaver's conference, Durango, CO, Jul. 29-31. Her tapestry, "Lily," is in the private art collection of McGraw-Hill Companies in Columbus, OH. Many of the weft yarns in this tapestry were dyed with natural dyes from plants cultivated in her dye garden, or collected in the wild on the Arizona/New Mexico border. j.hoffman@frontiernet.net

Daryl Hafter writes, "I've recently returned from a 3-week trip to India, where the colors of saris, the flavors of the country, and the splendence of the Indian people so impressed me. Of course textiles were in my eye, and I'd like to share a book source with you. At the wonderful Rambagh Palace Hotel in Jaipur is a bookstore with excellent scholarly books on the history of textiles. The other hotels in this chain had interesting books, too. Their service is very reliable and prompt." Mr. Navin Jain, Photo Services Rambagh Palace Hotel Jaipur, RA 302005 India. dhafter@ernich.edu

Nancy Arthur Hoskins, author of *The Coptic Tapestry Albums and the Archaeologist of Antinoë*, *Albert Gayet*, juried the "Fiberworks 2005" exhibit for the Handweavers League of Oklahoma and taught a workshop, "Linen: Endearing and Enduring." Nancy will present workshops and lectures for the Midwest Weaver's

Conference in Sheboygan, WI in June; for the Association of Northwest Weaving Guilds in Tacoma, WA in August; for American Research in Egypt's Northern California Chapter in November; and in England in March, 2006. nhoSKEIN@pcisys.net

Leesa Hubbell is guest curator of "Batik Fashion/American Style" at the American Textile History Museum in Lowell, MA, May 7-Sep. 5. It tells the story of the East/West collaboration between entrepreneurial American designers and Javanese batik artisans currently working in Bali and Java, and showcases the hand-made fabric and fashion which is the end-product of this highly creative multicultural enterprise. Leesa will give two illustrated lectures on the batik fashion exhibition on Jun. 12, at the ATHM (www.athm.org), as part of the World Batik Conference in Boston (www.massart.edu/batik). She will give an illustrated presentation on "Bali Batik" on May 14 at the New England Quilt Museum (nequilt-museum.org) in Lowell, where a juried exhibition of quilts using batik will be on view. la.hubbell@worldnet.att.net

Cristin McKnight organized an exhibition as part of her Fulbright research: "Traditions-in-Use: Contemporary Patronage of Hand-Painted *Kalamkari* Textiles from Sri Kalahasti, Andhra Pradesh," May 4-10 at Kamataka Chitrakala Parishat Art Complex, Bangalore, India. cristinmcknight@yahoo.com <http://www.kalamkariart.org>

Thomas Murray's review of an important exhibition of cross-cultural non-Western textiles curated by James Blackmon at the Columbus Museum of Fine Arts was published in *Hali* magazine in January. Thomas curated an exhibition last September in the Sydney gallery, Nomadic Rug

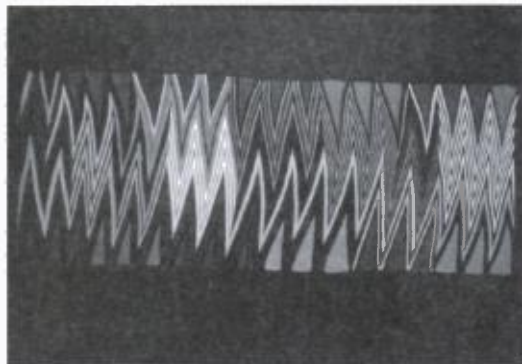


Traders, during the "ICOC DownUnder," which featured Indian trade cloth and Indonesian textiles. Robyn Maxwell, Chief Curator at the National Gallery of Australia, called it "The most important exhibition of this important early material ever to appear in Australia outside a museum."

tmurray@well.com

Julia E. Pfaff will present a workshop on freezer paper appliqué at the International Surface Design Association Conference, Jun. 2-5 in Kansas City, MO. Concurrent with the conference, her exhibition "Narratives, Prints and Improvisations" will be at the Hallar Gallery in Kansas City. Her quilted fabric constructions combine dye painting with lithography, etching and monotype. Pfaff is currently adjunct faculty at Virginia Commonwealth University in the Department of Fashion Design and Merchandising. jepfaff@aol.com

TSA Board members **Vita Plume** and **Laura Strand** participated in a group exhibition, "Recursions: Material Expression of Zeros and Ones" at the Museum of Design, Atlanta, GA Jan. 11-Mar. 26, curated by **Carol Lebaron**. Other participating artists were: **Lia Cook**, Bethanne Knudson, L.M. Wood, Bhakti Ziek, **Susan Brandeis**, **Pat Williams**, **Junco Pollack**, Cathy Treadaway, Lisa Parillo Chapman, and Jessica Smith.



Fran Reed, Anchorage, AK, had three fishskin pieces juried into "Earth, Fire & Fiber" at the Anchorage Museum of History and Art, juried by David McFadden of the Museum of Art & Design, NY. One piece received a juror's award. The show will travel in New York State for one year. Fran is also participating in the following shows: National Basketry Organization's fund-raiser sale (www.nationalbasketry.org); "Ocean Art and Nature," group show at Pratt Museum, Homer, AK, Apr. 4-Jun. 4; "Aquatic Influences," Pratt Museum, Homer, AK, Aug. 19-Oct. 2.

The Murdock Charitable Trust purchased one of Fran's baskets and will use an image of it for the cover of their book, *Message from Alaska*. dfreed@alaska.net

Cynthia Schira reports that one of her artworks was acquired by the MFA, Boston for their permanent collection. schirar@westelcom.com

Barbara Shapiro was recently accepted as a Master Member to the prestigious Baulines Craft Guild of the San Francisco Bay Area. Her work was on display in their gallery through Apr. 14. Boneweavr@aol.com

Karen Searle's work is included in "Material Content: Basketry Sculpture in the 21st Century," at Craft Alliance Gallery, St. Louis, MO through May 15. Her work using shredded currency is in the 75th Anniversary Exhibition at Crane Museum of Papermaking,



Dalton, MA this summer, sponsored by Crane Paper Co., papermaker for US currency since 1775 (when the Crane family made currency paper for Paul Revere to help finance the American Revolution). ksearle@visi.com

Carol Westfall's work entitled "Pink Globally" was exhibited at the "Miniartexti Como" in Como, Italy. The show then travelled to another site in Italy before opening Mar. 11 in Paris. Her piece, "Anthrax," appeared in a group show in Chieri, Italy in 2004 and will tour to Switzerland during 2005. carol@carolwestfall.com

London member **Linda Wigglesworth** participated in the International Asian Art Fair, Apr. 1-6 in New York, displaying rare Chinese silk textiles. info@lindawigglesworth.com

Wendy Weiss and Jay Kreimer have presented their textile, sound and motion installation called "Traveler's Field" in three venues over the course of the past year. The installation takes on a unique form in each venue. It was on view at the Design Gallery, University of Wisconsin-Madison, through May 1 and was recently shown at the University Place Art Center, Lincoln, NE. Mar. 4-26; and Triangle Gallery, Sinclair Community College, Dayton, OH, Mar. 30-Apr. 23. wweiss@unlnotes.unl.edu

Left, "Lily," tapestry by **Jane Hoffman**, now in the McGraw Hill Collection. **Center, "Nightlife,"** tapestry by **Deborah Corsini**, in the US Embassy Art Collection. **Right, "Journal Excerpts, 2004,"** by **Julia Pfaff**, 23.5 x 26, Lithography on hand dyed cotton. Machine pieced and quilted.

Elayne Zorn was interviewed by Faye Clow of the Bettendorf Public Library Information Center, Augustana College, and co-host of the Augustana Public Radio program "About Books." Elayne discussed Andean weaving and her recent book. *Weaving a Future: Tourism, Cloth, and Culture on an Andean Island* (University of Iowa Press, 2004). <http://www.augustana.edu/wvvh/listings-aboutbooks.htm>. ezorn@mail.ucf.edu

Member Publications

Patricia Cheesman, textile artist and art historian, recently published *Lao-Tai Textiles: The Textiles of Xam Nuea and Muang Phuan*. This publication is an in-depth study of the historic textiles from northeast Laos that have become renowned for their beauty, complex weaving and fascinating symbolic meaning. It is lavishly illustrated with colour plates and the captivating text is based on Patricia's 30 years of research. 297pp. Color. 533 plates. More details are online at www.infothai.com/naenna or contact Lamorna at patstudi@loxinfo.co.th



TSA/Textile Museum Annual Bibliography

THE ANNUAL *BIBLIOGRAPHY* for 2004, published jointly by The Textile Museum, Washington, DC and the Textile Society of America, will be sent to current members this summer. The *Bibliography* lists textile-related books and articles published during the preceding year as a service to researchers and members of both organizations.

2005 Citations Needed
Citations are needed for the 2005 *Bibliography*. Please help us to compile an accurate listing by sending in 2005 book and article citations between now and December 31, 2005.

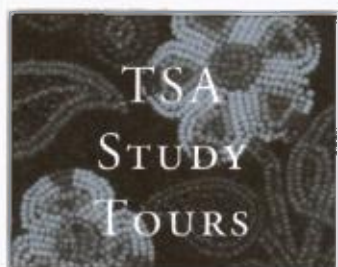
The Textile Museum also requests that TSA members who publish books during 2005 send a copy of the book to Mary Mallia at the Textile Museum's library. In addition to noting the bibliographic citation, Mary will add the books to the the Textile Museum Library's collection.

Mary Mallia, Bibliography Editor
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PROMOTE TSA

TSA's beautiful membership brochures are available from the TSA office. Please take some brochures with you to textile-related events to distribute to colleagues and friends.

tsa@dol.net



Southwest Basketry Tour Preview

Indian Basketry of the Southwest April 16-24, 2006

TSA WILL SPONSOR an eight-day tour focusing on historic and contemporary basket making in the Southwestern US. Our tour guide, author Larry Dalrymple, will take us from our starting point in Albuquerque, NM to visit with Apache, Tohono O'odham, Hopi, and Navajo basket makers in Arizona and New Mexico. We will enjoy the natural wonders of the desert Southwest while meeting these renowned native basket-makers and visiting reservations, museums, cultural centers and trading posts along the way.

Cost: To Be Announced. Watch the TSA website for more detailed information.
<http://textilesociety.org>



Ghana Trip

by Heather Brooks Shirey, TSA Scholarship Recipient

I WISH TO THANK the Textile Society of America for awarding me the Travel Scholarship for Young Scholars, which allowed me to participate in the Textile Study Tour in Ghana last January. I am now halfway through a new semester, in which I am teaching an introductory course on African Art History at St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN. It is especially exciting to teach this course after having so recently returned from Ghana. I have nearly 1,000 new images, some great stories and a wealth of remarkable experiences to share with my students.

In my classes, I regularly discuss and compare a variety of textile traditions from West Africa and the African Diaspora in terms of modes of production, function, form, and significance in historical and contemporary social contexts. In the past, I often found it difficult to explain how some textiles—*Kente* and *Adinkra* among them—are produced. Having only read about these textiles, my understanding of the process was abstract at best. Now, based on observation and hands-on experience at the loom, I feel fully equipped to discuss both Ewe and Asante *Kente* cloth in the classroom.

On the trip we had many opportunities to interact with



Adinkra strips produced by members of our group in a workshop in Ntonso, Ghana. Photo: Heather Brooks Shirey.

both the producers and consumers of the textiles we were studying. Thanks to this and the many stimulating conversations I had with other participants in the tour, I can engage my students in a more sophisticated and nuanced discussion of the central role that textiles play in daily life in southern Ghana. In addition, our travels through three regions of Ghana deepened my understanding of the rich cultural and historical context in which cloth is used, both in the past and in contemporary life.

Prior to this trip, my research as an art historian had been focused on Brazil. Although I regularly teach African Art, I had not had the opportunity to travel to Africa. I was often frustrated by the fact that many of my classroom discussions of daily life in Africa were based on second-hand accounts. I wanted to convey to my students a real sense of the sounds, the smells, and the feel of daily life in a given portion of West Africa. Our trip in Ghana, which took us from big cities to small villages, through markets and to shrines, with stops at roadside gas stations and for bathroom breaks in the bush, will enrich not just my teaching, but also my understanding of the world.

One of my goals for the trip was to create a strong collection of images illustrating the production and use of textiles in southern Ghana, as well as scenes of

Weaver at work in Accra, Ghana. Photo: Heather Brooks Shirey.

various aspects of daily life to use in the classroom. I also hoped to collect textiles so that my students can have the experience of seeing and touching actual cloth in addition to studying two-dimensional images. I feel fortunate that the tour allowed me to achieve both of these goals. Art history majors are often trained to hold the art object as something precious and rare. Having the chance to handle special pieces of cloth reminds students that these textiles are created to be seen, touched and often displayed in movement on the human body.

I learned a great deal from daily contact with the talented and insightful Ghanaian guides who traveled with us, as well as from many of the artists we befriended along the way. I also appreciate the opportunity to travel with such a diverse group of women. The participants included art historians, museum professionals, artists, and collectors, and I think we each approached the trip with different ideas and goals. I was able to establish professional and personal relationships that I hope will last a lifetime.

I wish to express my deep appreciation to the Textile Society of America and to Lisa Aronson for making my participation in the Study Tour possible. I am certain that the scholarship for young scholars will have a tremendously positive impact on the course of my career.

— *Heather Brooks-Shirey*
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Textile exhibition in the Andafiavaratra Museum, Madagascar, resulting from workshop participants' efforts. Photo: Julia Brennan.

Textile Conservation Training in Madagascar, from p. 2

Understanding the distinction between conservation and restoration was particularly important in working with a collection in very poor condition; to my mind, this was one of the project's most significant achievements. Workshop participants learned the ethics and parameters of conservation, and to accept age and imperfections as part of the history of the artifact. Equally important, working on an important national textile collection heightened and reinforced the participants' respect for and pride in Madagascar's textile heritage.

I taught methods of display and mounting during the last portion of the workshop. The designs of these mounts, including Velcro and slat, roller and stretcher supports, were all new techniques for the trainees. Finally, a modern and appropriate textile storage room was designed and installed at the Andafiavaratra Museum. This is the first storage facility of this standard in Madagascar, and a model for other museums.

The workshop culminated in a superb national textile exhibition. This show has attracted hundreds of visitors, including many school groups coming to learn about historic lamba for the first time.



Conservation: The Past as Prologue

This textile conservation project was an important start for Madagascar. We made good progress in conserving a small collection of textiles and raised participants' skill and knowledge levels. However, ongoing sustainable training will be vital in order to advance an understanding of the importance and viability of preservation of cultural property.

Repeated training sessions will help set new goals, empower the staff, and offer creative ways to achieve success within the museum hierarchies. Training not only builds specific skills, it also builds confidence and strengthens cultural pride. These benefits will reach far beyond the walls of a single museum.

This kind of training focus can add greatly to the value of Madagascar's museums and is much needed. Our foreign counterparts and other museum staff are eager to learn and implement better standards of practice; they simply need training and professional encouragement. Many curators, anthropologists and textile researchers travel and work abroad; however the field of conservation is not as well represented in this arena. I urge my conservation colleagues to volunteer their time to work overseas on small, distinct projects, teaching

fundamental principles and practices of conservation, and aiding in the often-neglected field of preservation.

A project such as this one did not require large budgets for infrastructure or materials. This grant, including funds for materials, exhibition room construction, lighting, display materials, national educational packets, storage room upgrades and my travel costs, was \$27,000. It was a small investment that yielded remarkable returns. Textile professionals who can teach conservation (and appreciate the adventure of working in less-than ideal conditions) will find abundant opportunities and funding to get in on the ground floor. Their contributions will have lasting impact.

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