

A Field Trip with Keogh Design

'Interwoven Globe: The Worldwide Textile Trade, 1500-1800' at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art through January 5, 2014

Glossary

Fabrics

The simplest definition of **weaving**: two groups of threads or yarns interlaced perpendicularly. The **warp** is one group, usually put on the loom first, and often forming the longer dimension of the fabric. The **weft** threads are then inserted across the loom at right angles to the warp, going under and over the warp threads.

Brocade, from Italian *broccato* meaning embossed cloth, is produced by using an additional weft (along with the main weft that holds the warp threads together), and gives the fabric the appearance that the weave was embroidered on. **Embroidery** is a stitching technique for decorating fabric with needle and thread or yarn.

Calico is made from unbleached, and often not fully-processed, cotton. It was originally from the city of Kōlikkōdu (the English called it Calicut) in southwestern India. The fabric was dyed and block-printed in bright colors and calico prints became hugely popular in Europe and in colonial America.

Chintz comes from a Hindu word meaning colorful cloth. Chintzes were of cotton printed with designs featuring flowers and other patterns in different colors, typically on a light plain background. The fabric was pounded to give chintz its distinctive shiny, glazed surface.

Damask of silk, wool, linen, cotton, or synthetic fiber, has a pattern that is formed by weaving, usually in one color, with a glossy warp-faced satin pattern against a duller ground; the design becomes visible as light illuminates the different surface textures. Damask derives its name from the city of Damascus which both exported and manufactured damask during the Middle Ages.

Fustian refers to a kind of heavy woven cotton that was chiefly used in mens' wear for padding. It also has a literary use, referring to pompous, inflated or pretentious writing or speech.

Jacquard is a technology named after Joseph-Marie Jacquard, who patented the Jacquard loom attachment in 1801. Automating the raising of the warp threads, it revolutionized the textile industry and made an almost unlimited variety of pattern weaving possible.

Lampas is a very luxurious fabric using complicated weave, silks, and often gold or silver thread.

Twill is a type of weave with a pattern of diagonal parallel ribs. Because of this structure, twills generally drape well. Examples of twill fabric are denim, tweed, chino, gabardine and serge.

Velvet is woven with supplementary warp loops which are then cut to create the short dense pile. The cut loops may be continuous, as in plain velvet, or with alternating areas of cut or uncut pile to create cut or **voided** velvet.

Techniques and Dyeing

The **cochineal** is a scale insect native to tropical and subtropical South America and Mexico, from which the crimson-colored dye is derived. The dye was used in Central America in the 15th century for coloring fabrics and became an important export during the colonial period.

Indigo dye has a distinctive blue color. Historically, indigo was a natural dye extracted from plants, and important economically because blue dyes were once rare. It is the blue of blue jeans.

A **mordant**, usually a metal ion, is used to set dyes by forming a complex with the dye which then attaches to the fabric. The term mordant comes from the French *mordre*, to bite. It was thought in the past that a mordant helped the dye bite onto the fiber so that it would hold fast during washing. Common mordants: alum (aluminum sulfate), chrome, tin, and iron.

A **palampore** was a hand-painted and mordant-dyed bed cover made in India for the export market during the 18th and 19th centuries. An artisan drew designs on cotton or linen fabric with a pen containing mordant and then dipped the textile in dye. The dye adhered to the cloth only where the mordant had been applied, and this lengthy process was repeated for each color in the design. Small details were then painted by hand on the cloth after the dyeing process was completed. Palampore patterns were usually very complex and elaborate, depicting a wide variety of plants, flowers, and animals.

Resist-dyeing uses methods to 'resist' or prevent the dye from reaching all the cloth, creating a pattern and a ground. The most common forms use wax, paste, or a mechanical resist that manipulates the cloth such as tying or stitching. Well-known examples of resist-dyeing are tie-dye and batik.

Two tone: Warp threads and weft threads are interwoven in contrasting colors to create a fabric with a blend of the two colors. For example, red threads running right to left with blue threads running up and down create a fabric with dominant color purple. When viewed from one angle there is a shimmer of red and a blue shimmer looking from the opposite angle that creates an iridescent surface sheen.

Fashion

A **banyan** (through Portuguese *banian* and Arabic banyān, from the Gujarati *vāṇiyo*, meaning merchant) is a garment worn by men in the 18th century. The banyan was a loose, t-shaped or kimono-like cotton, linen or silk gown worn at home as a sort of dressing gown or informal coat over shirt and breeches. The typical banyan was cut with the sleeves and body cut as one piece.

A **petticoat** was a skirt-like garment worn under a skirt or a dress, for warmth or to give the dress or skirt worn over it a fashionable shape, and was meant to be seen.

Robe à la Française, worn throughout the 18th century, features a pleated back with what were known as Watteau pleats. It was the style of dress for the most formal occasions. The other most common 18th century gown is the ***Robe à l'Anglaise***, a style with a tight, fitted back. The ***Robe à la Polonoise*** was named for the division of Poland into three parts in 1772, symbolized by the three portions of the skirt when drawn up. You can see what these looked like and learn more at this terrific website <http://americanduchess.blogspot.com>