



Africa Textile



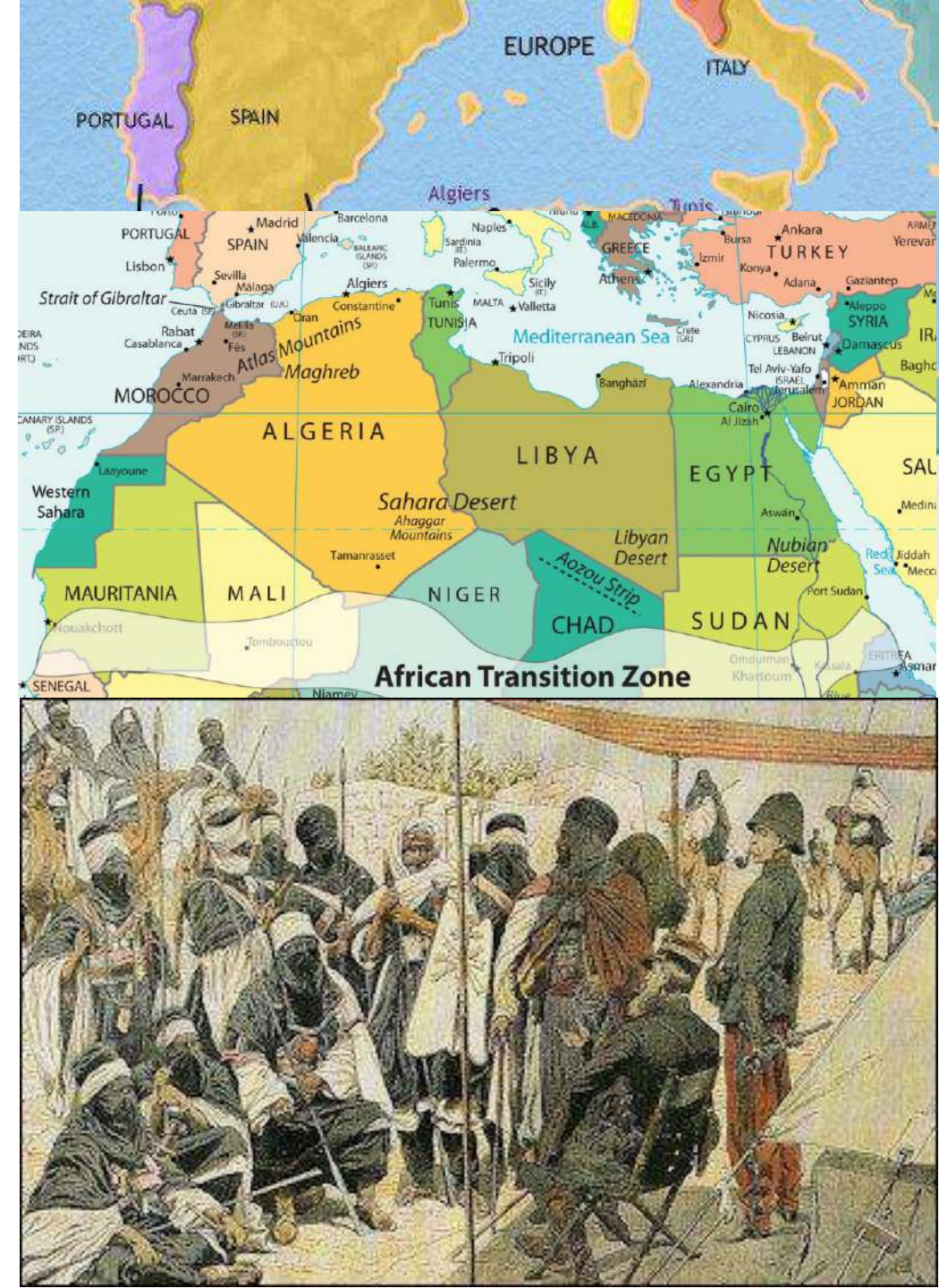
Africa Textile

Woven, Embroidered, Printed, Resist Dyeing And
Lace Textile.



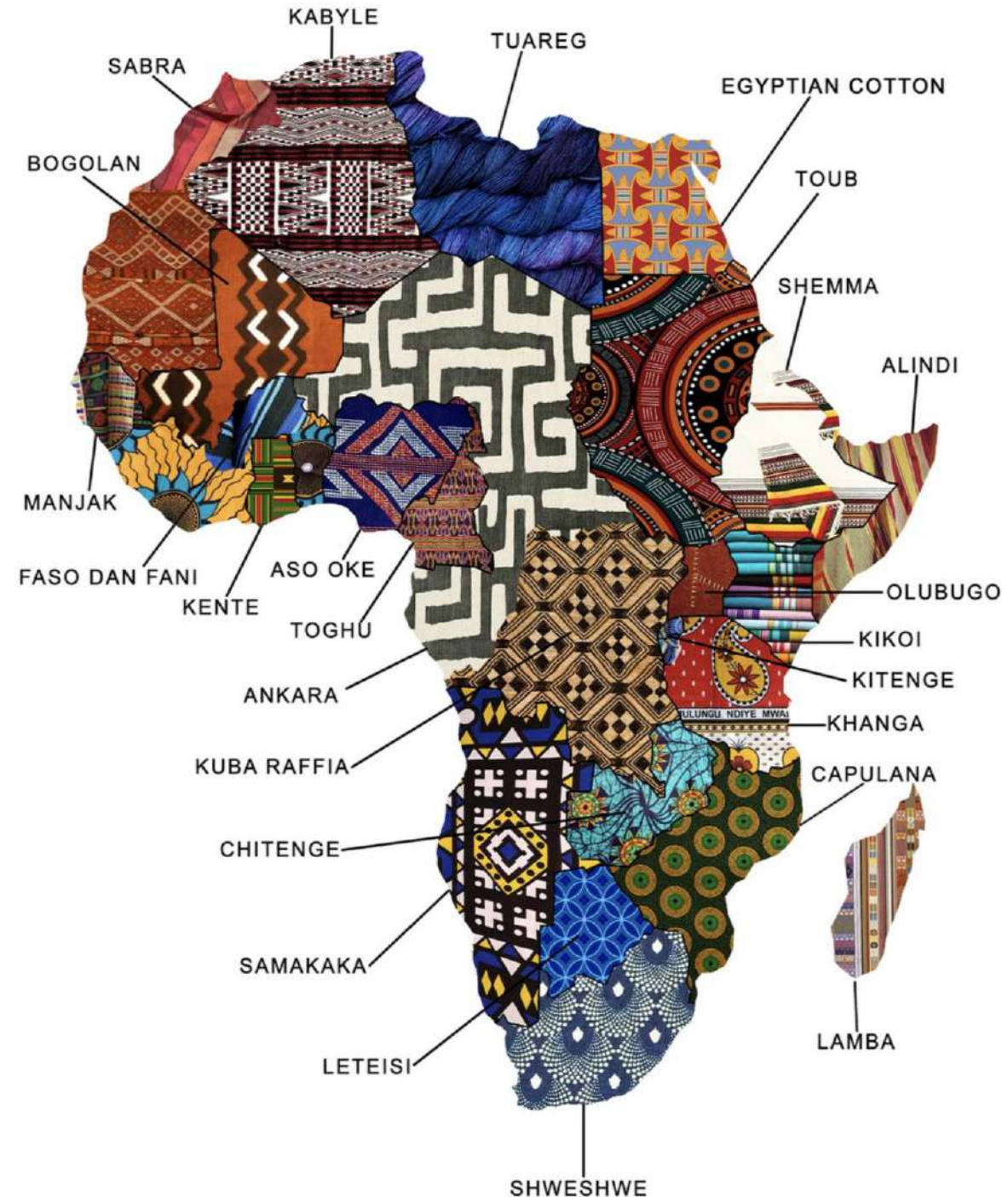
History, Geography and Climate

- The climate and topography of Africa is extraordinarily varied. The peaks of the High Atlas mountains of Morocco tower over 13,000 feet, whereas oases in the depressions of the Libyan Desert descend to sea level or below.
- The mild, temperate conditions of the Mediterranean and Atlantic coasts give way to the searing daytime heat and freezing nighttime temperatures of the desert lands to the south.
- Crops and vegetation thrive on the fertile northern plains and along the Nile valley, whereas scarcely anything grows in the desert save in the lush oases where the water table is close to the surface.
- Ancient Egyptian art gives us a fairly detailed picture of how people in this part of North Africa dressed, at least as far back as 5000 B.C.E.
- Elsewhere, the extraordinary rock paintings of the Sahara, the Atlas Mountains, and the Nile valley, dating from c. 12000 to 3000 B.C.E.
- Gives an idea of how people might have dressed when the interior of North Africa had a much wetter climate, supporting animals such as hippos, elephants, giraffes, and rhinos.



Introduction

- Textile may be more beautiful and skillful executive but they belong essentially to a refined folk tradition rather than to a courtly tradition which has percolated down the economic scale.
- Rich tradition of weaving and embroidery
- Traditional costume in North Africa divides into drapes and sewn which was worn by nomadic, oasis and mountain people.
- Also it is weaved by cotton and wool.
- It consist of plain length cloth, decorated woven belt, head dresses veils and magnificent jewellery.
- Metalwork and fine weaving were common in their work.
- Africa has imitation of Turkish element such as gold embroidered wedding caftan.
- Caftan is a regional wedding dress and its colour is white nylon and tulle.



- Decoration is mainly done with silk and metal thread.
- Nomadic girl are expertise in producing carpet, bed cover and clothing.
- Middle and upper class girl mainly learn embroidery and make it a reliable source of income.
- They learn weaving from home and embroidery from teacher or designer also known as “ Ma’allema” .
- Women mainly work for their family essentials and large number of kelims (Kelim is a flat tapestry woven carpet or rugs) and some time help in surplus for their house.
- Men wove and embroidered for sale and belong to guilds.
- Knotted carpet, elaborate braiding, silk button, tassels, applique hitti(hanging), leather and gold embroidery was generally done by men because of their physical strength.
- Silk and metal embroidery was mainly done on that time.
- In Tunis, metal embroidered sequins work was mainly used in wedding.



Traditional African Clothing

- Traditional African clothing articles are dated back to hundreds of years ago. Not only is African clothing unique in style, but it also represents symbolism, tribalism and history.
- Africa is a continent full of different cultures and people and African clothing represents all of these styles.
- Throughout the years African clothing has modernized and changed to fit the latest fashion trends, while still keeping its unique style.
- Today, African clothing comes in various colors, design, materials and styles.
- They can be used for various functions and occasions or even just for every day wear.
- Each of these clothing styles has their very own authentic look and identity.
- African clothing is stylish and functional.
- There are various styles available, which include articles of clothing that are Kenyan, Nigerian, Ghanaian, Senegalese, Rwandan, Ugandan, Egyptian, Kitenge, Lace, Leso, Gele, Iro, Isiagu, Kanzu, Kalasiris, etc.
- Each style is a reflection of its region and diversity.
- The ethnic styles are versatile and an informative way to visually represent what African clothing and culture is about.
- African clothes are ideal for those wishing to connect with both the past and future generations.



- **Dashikis:**

- ✓ This is a colorful and unique garment that covers the upper part of the body. It is often paired with drawstring pants.
- ✓ Dashiki garments are worn in formal and informal occasions and for a variety of ceremonies.

- **Boubou:**

- ✓ A boubou is a type of Dashiki that is generally worn with matching pants and a long robe that covers the outfit.
- ✓ They come in various styles and colors and are suitable for any function.

- **Kente:**

- ✓ The kente is made from a cloth that is a type of silk and cotton.
- ✓ The fabric is made of interwoven cloth strips, which originates from Ghana.

- **Kaba:**

- ✓ A kaba is a long wrap-around skirt and matching blouse made from African wax print or cloth.
- ✓ The skirt has a pair of strings in the waist, which is drawn together to fit the waist or sometimes normal zips could even be used.

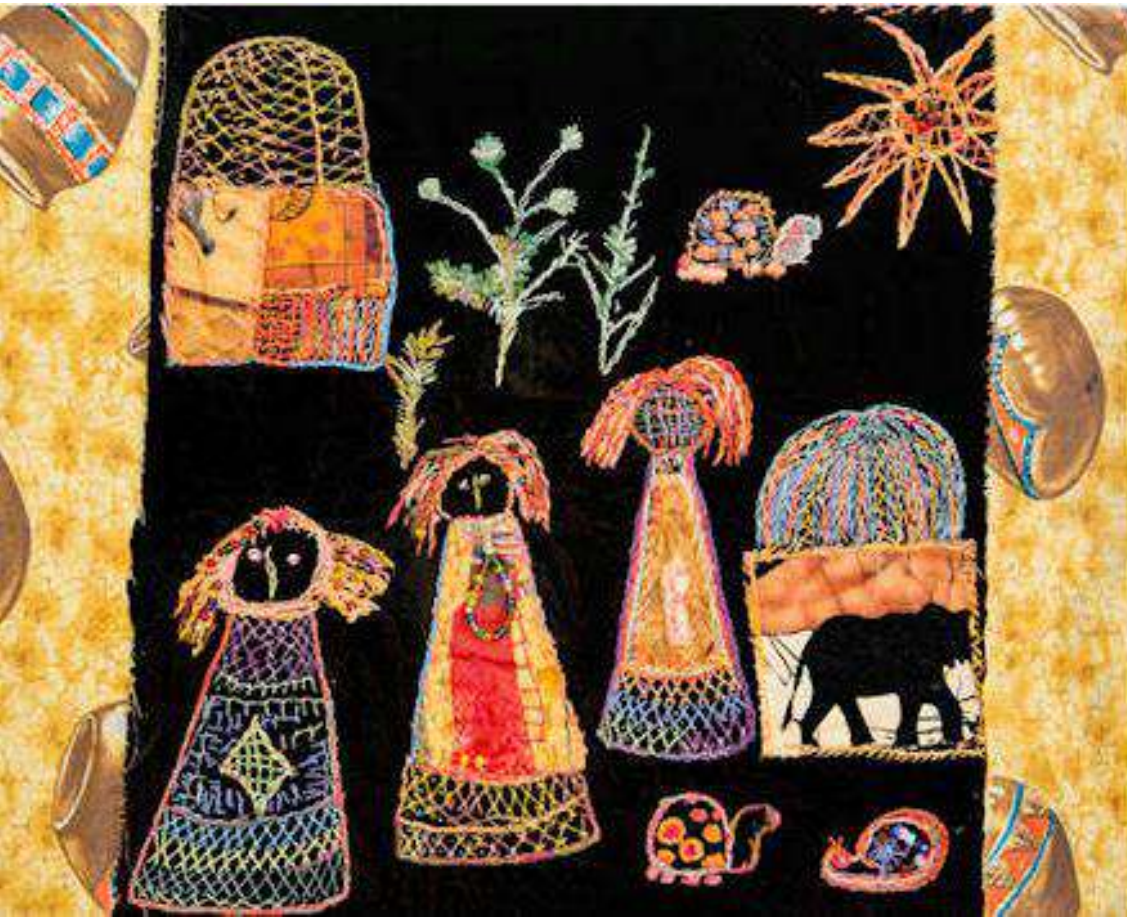
- **Yoruba:**

- ✓ The yoruba is a four-piece outfit, which consists of a hat, a Buba, embroidered pants and a flowing Agbada.
- ✓ A Yoruba also includes an African Bariga, which is an outfit that is comprised of a long-sleeved shirt, a hat, and embroidered pants and a flowing Buba.



Embroidery

- Mainly two type of embroidery was famous in Africa that is
 - ✓ Gold embroidery
 - ✓ Silk embroidery
- Some other embroidery are also visible.



Gold Embroidery

- Libya to Morocco has a great Turkish influence in gold embroidery.
- Gold thread work was mainly seen in marriage caftans, horse trappings, belt, qabqab(mules), slipper, bag or pouch and especially for the Koren and Hitti.
- It was commonly done in silk or velvet background.
- Dark blue, black, dark green, garnet or violet colour was mainly seen.
- Calligraphy appears on mosque hangings, banners and tomb covers.
- The bell shaped wrapover skirt is heavily embroidered in gold with an asymmetric 'rising sun' pattern.
- They make gold thread, brads and sequins to do embroidery.
- It was a common practice for a women in middle age to burn these wedding clothes in order to retrieve the silver.
- Another type of goldwork was flat metal threadwork which was mainly seen in Tunisian region.
- Fish-scales, snakes and so on motif was made through this.
- The black and gold dresses from Hammamet are a good example to show traditional African dress which is having gold horseshoe shape collar(seen in dig beside).



Silk Embroidery

- It exists in coast and central area of Africa and is rare in South Africa.
- The design was seen like East Europe, having a Turkish style flower and pomegranates.
- All the classic embroidery was mainly done in yellow satin.
- These silk embroidery was mainly done in two area of Africa that is Fez and Tetouan.
- Silk embroidery was mainly used in hangings, cushions, and bed cover.
- But in area of Rabat beautiful satin stitch embroidery is seen in marriage curtain, belts and head covering border which have almost 40-45 shades of one or two colour.
- And in this they make motif of stylized flower petals or perhaps clouds.
- Bou Reg Reg is also a place in Africa where geometric and closed work is mainly visible.
- Its lastly is very good.
- Sale design is mainly taken from Fez because it is long lasting.
- Some of the oldest surviving silk embroideries are from Algeria and have very fine quality.
- It contain scrolling patterns, work like a check board and doted with small delicate flower.
- Here purple colour is prominent colour used for scarves.
- Whereas curtain are mainly seen in blue or red colour and having a Tetouan style.



Some Other Type Of Embroidery

- Wool embroidery is not particular common as it is mostly decorated in woven pattern.
- Mainly these embroideries is seen in Gabes in Tunisia which is the mountain area.
- Applique work was seen in North Africa.
- Hangings and tent was made mainly from Applique generally with red and green velvet coloured fabric.
- Mirror work also came in view in 17th century.
- It mainly has geometric motif highly stylized and also rarely calligraphy work was also visible.



Weaving

- Africa was traditionally a weaving rather than an embroidery culture.
- Weaving of cloths and rugs is still a live art in this region.
- Silk and fine wool is generally no longer made because of its expensive price.
- But in the middle age fine silk was woven especially at Tripoli and kairovan.
- Fez was famous for Brocades.
- Djerva was famous for check and Striped silk cloth which was generally woven by Jews.
- Some other production centre were in Gabes Oasis, Tozeur, Djerid, and other coastal area of Algeria.
- They use different kind of wool and sometime combine them with cotton.



- Men's robes and cloaks was woven of the finest cream- coloured camel wool.
- In every area people wear different kind of wool such as:-
 - At Nabeul plain woollen cloaks is made with natural dye of colour terracotta, ochre and Roman purple.
 - At Anti- Atlas the Berber men wear black goat's hair burnouses with great orange half moon at the back and patterened with delicate geometric design.
- Talking about the women
- Veil was the main costume wore by them
 - Girl wear white
 - Married Women wear red.
 - Elderly Women wear blue.
- They have stylized motif of combs, snake, scorpion and so on.
- When the veil is new, design is hardly visible but as it is pile it become more clear.
- Hanging, blankets, rugs to throw, saddle cloths piece are maid from grain sacks.
- Kelim that is tapestry carpet or rug was famous in Africa.
- Wool were mainly woven by Women specially elaborated pattern rugs.



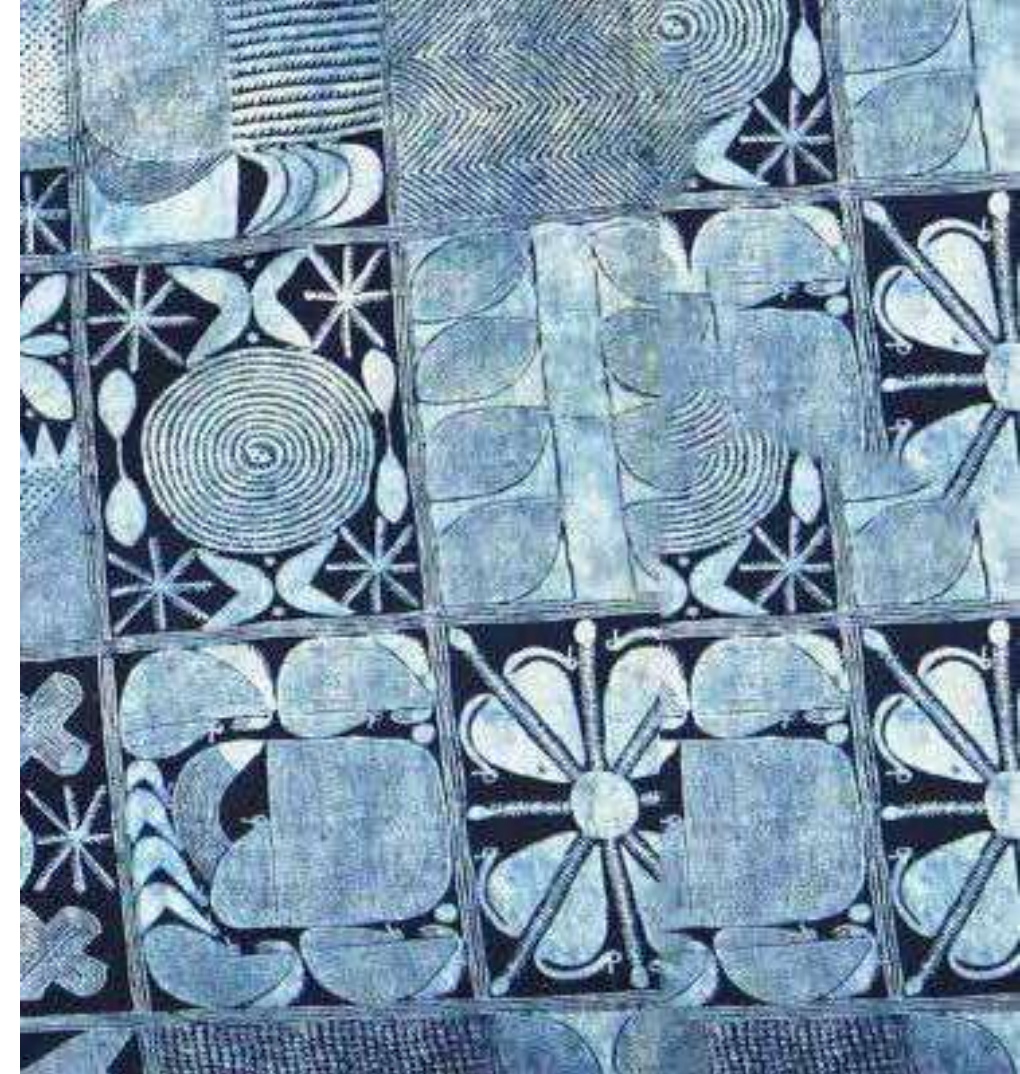
Printing

- The origin of African fabric dates back to when the ancient Egyptians began cultivating flax and weaving it into linen.
- Later, cotton began to be used more as a textile for clothing.
- African Wax Print, is not originated from Africa.
- The popular African Wax Print is actually designed by European textile industries which later picked by the African textiles and they made it their own after the large sale of the fabric.
- Another story associated with the origin of the African Wax Print says that the West African men who were used as slaves by the Dutch army became a source of the introducing the fabric in European countries in mid-1800.
- Some other vague also associated to African Wax Print, but recently Vlisco prints are popular and the Dutch company is progressing by leaps and bounds.
- It's the pure form cotton and extremely soft to touch. Because of the high-quality of the fabric, African Wax Print is expensive than the other kinds of African prints.
- African Wax print is the best solution of the summer season when scorching heat and the blazing sun never let you wear any other fabric.
- Vibrant colors and variety in designs make it the best alternative of silk or fancy clothes and even you can wear it on weddings or special events.
- The delicate fabric of African Wax Print stretchable and perfectly tailored into different shapes like blouses, skirts, and shirts.



Dyeing

- Africa is known for its cultural and artistic traditions.
- The elegant attires and beautiful fabrics are regarded with respect by textile curators of various cultural backgrounds.
- The pride of African culture and heritage is displayed through their fabrics which have distinct styles, and forms that indicate the ethnic diversity of the country.
- Cloth dyeing is the main source of income for woman from Labe, West Africa. In some places nearly everyone, including men and children are involved in this process.
- Cloth production in Africa not only varies from place to place, but is also influenced by societal change.
- Indigo dyeing is done by women in Yoruba, and Soninke of West Africa, but among Hausa, this task is undertaken by men.
- The traditional and non industrial nature of dyeing and the way it is practiced makes it all the more fascinating.
- African traditional methods of dyeing clothes have now become a part of the contemporary art.
- Majority of the weavers use only locally produced dyes, and hence only a limited number of shades are available.
- Brown, green, yellow, and red are mostly used, and by far, the most important color of African dyes has been indigo.
- Over the centuries, a vast majority of clothes were being produced by combining the natural white color with indigo blue.
- Very fine quality of clothes were dyed in dark indigo and then dyed with more indigo paste by specialist people so as to give it a glazed sheen.
- These are extremely expensive and are worn as face veils by nomads throughout North Africa.



Indigo dyeing women

Dyeing vats

Resist Dyeing

- This method is extremely popular in West African countries like Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Benin, and Sierra Leone.
- Various methods are applied to protect some parts of the cloth while other parts are dyed.
- Tie and dye, sew and dye, batik, and using cassava paste resist are most common methods of resist dyeing.
- In tie and dye method, small areas of cloth are tied using raffia strings before dyeing.
- Sew and dye is a method, where designs are sewn on the clothes and the stitches are picked later to reveal a light on the dark pattern.
- In batik method, melted wax is applied on the fabric to resist the dye.
- This will be a combination of paraffin wax and bees wax.
- Bees wax will stick to the fabric, while paraffin wax will allow some cracking, which is the characteristic of some batik.
- Then the cloth is either dipped or painted with colorful dyes.
- When the cloth is dyed, the colour is absorbed by the other areas where wax is not applied.
- This method is popular all over Africa and Indonesia.
- Cassava paste is similar to batik, where a paste is applied on the cloth mostly through a stencil that will resist dye from penetrating into that part of the cloth. Batik designs are mostly used in wrap around skirts.



Tie and dye

wax-batik

sew and dye

Mud Dyeing

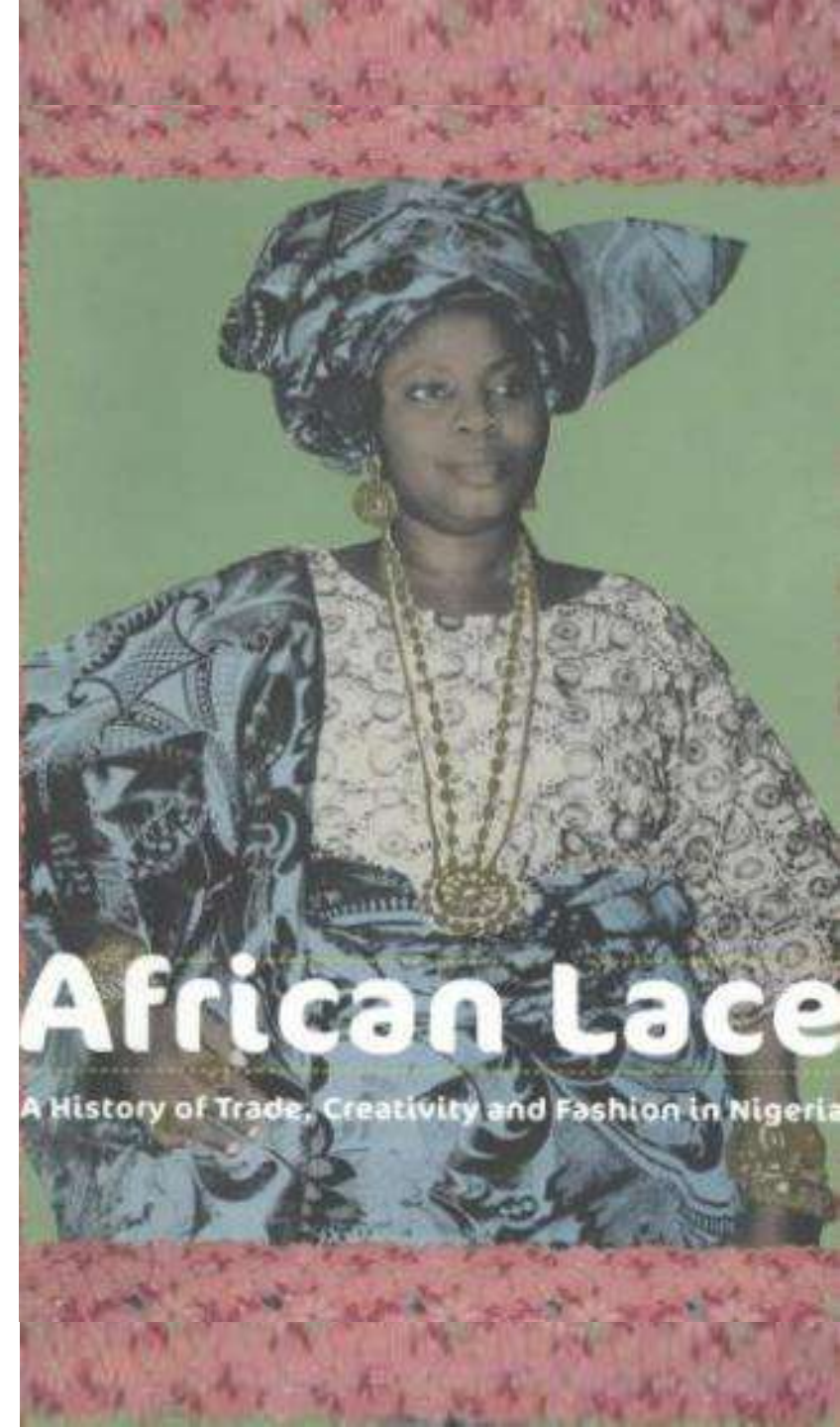
- Women of Mali make a special kind of hand dyed cloth known as mud cloth used during special occasions like birth, marriage, and death.
- Techniques for dyeing this cloth and motifs are passed down through generations from mothers to daughters.
- No two clothes will have identical patterns, colour combinations or designs.
- The colours, symbols etc of this cloth reveal a persons social status, and national identity.
- This cloth is usually dyed in black with white designs.
- The cloth is first prepared for dyeing by soaking pounded leaves of Bogolon, a native tree of Mali in a special solution.
- This solution is dark in color and allows the dye to adhere with the cloth.
- Mud dyes are made by rich, iron mud taken from ponds mixed with water and is fermented up to one year.
- This mud dye is applied on the cloth using sticks, reeds, feathers, strips of bamboo etc.
- The background of the cloth is painted leaving the design to remain white. Later on the cloth is washed with solutions prepared with leaves to bind the cloth and the dye strongly.
- Traditionally this cloth is dyed with black and white color, cut other colors like grey and rust are also used.
- Mud cloth is believed to posses supernatural powers, and protects hunters.



Mud dyeing of Mali

Lace textile

- African Fabric Patterns are a major form of expression used to define Africa's culture.
- African Lace reconstructs the production and trade history of the industrial embroideries and explores their cultural and social significance in Nigeria.
- Nigerian lace fashion since the seventies and offers insight into the lively society life and vibrant fashion scene in Lagos.
- The story also touches sociopolitical issues related to the postcolonial history of Nigeria.
- The attire fashioned out of the expensive imported embroideries was an expression of the prosperity during the oil boom.
- They are noted for their rich design and mix-match of vibrant colors.
- Similarly, African laces are often made with delicate fabric with very rich and elaborate embroidery.
- It is very different from the laces of Europe and America as they are worn in very traditional designs that demonstrate their rich heritage.
- These African Fabrics are delicate fabrics made in web-like patterns by either machine or hand.
- African Laces were specifically made for kings, queens and aristocrats back in the 20th century.
- Today, they can be worn by anyone as traditional African attire.
- Voile Lace is known to be the highest quality fabric made of ground base fabrics stitched yarn that make up the elegant and definitive design.
- The ground base is commonly made of either polyester or 100% cotton while the lace itself is made from the thinnest cotton and best cotton fibers in the world.
- The special finish on the African Lace Fabric ensures the highest qualities that neither loses color nor shrink.
- Counterfeit and fake copies often shrinks and loses both shape and color as it's made of lower class fabric so one has to be careful when purchasing laces.





Conclusion

African people have a long history of producing intricate textiles, which we know from evidence ranging from the fabrics themselves to renderings on ancient tombs and pyramids. For more than a thousand years, Africa has been one of the world's great textile-producing regions.

From the above slide it is very clear that in every region of Africa there are variety of embroidery, weaving, print, dyeing and so on and all these have a difference speciality. Also through there embroidery and prints shows that how rich culture they follow.

At last I just want to conclude by telling that it can be a great opportunity for a designer to learn from there integrate work and put some element in there design as well.



Thank You!!

