



Workroom Threads

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Workroom to the Trade



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Ikat Endures

One of the biggest trends in fabric right now is ikat (pronounced ee-kat). We may think it's new, but ikat is known to have been created in western Asia possibly as early as the fourth century. Ikat is similar to batik and tie-dye which involve dying fabric *after* it is woven. The big difference with ikat is that the design is tie-dyed into the thread *before* the weaving process begins. Just imagine the time and precision put into the intricate weaving of an ikat!

Because of the time and precision put into the weaving of each ikat these fabrics have been extremely sought after and have been a symbol of status, wealth, family, and rank.

Sylvia Marvelli



Ikat 101

As with any art form, ikats vary widely from place to place. Many designs have ethnic, ritual, or symbolic meanings. Common motifs originating in Asia bear names such as ram's horn (shown here), pomegranate, or diamond.

Some cultures believe that this cloth is imbued with magical and mystical powers.



One way to spot an ikat is by the blurred edges of the motif. This is a result of the dyed yarns twisting or rolling as they are woven.

Weaving ikat fabrics is too expensive and time consuming to create today even with mass production. The ikat patterns we currently enjoy are in most cases ikat inspired prints. Printing allows us to get the ikat look without the labor and high price.



Ikat fabrics are being reinvented with bold designs and exotic colors. Most materials, including wool, cotton, and silk can be used to create ikats.

Adding an exotic punch of color and design is a great way to freshen up a room.

Ikat, Ikat Everywhere

If you weren't previously familiar with ikat you will now be more aware and find yourself spotting them everywhere. Even though they have been around for a long time and in vogue at different times throughout history, they are currently "in" again. Be alert for spotting ikat patterns in everything from home furnishings, carpet, apparel, and housewares.

Images obtained from the internet.

Where the ordinary becomes extraordinary

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