



The Book of Silk

Philippa Scott

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Luxury, beauty, refinement, sensuality, elegance - silk is synonymous with all of these. No fiber - natural or man-made - rivals its versatility. Silk is light but strong, smooth and soft, supremely adaptable. It can be made wonderfully warm or deliciously cool, and dyed with infinite subtlety or boldness of color. When worn or draped, its fluidity is spellbinding.

The Book of Silk follows the story of this remarkable material through 5,000 years, reproducing hundreds of fabrics, furnishings, and garments from all parts of the world. From ancient China, where the secret of reeling silkworm cocoons was first discovered, the narrative leads by the legendary Silk Routes to Byzantium and the Islamic world, to Ottoman Turkey and India - and on to the Renaissance, baroque, and rococo silks of Western Christendom. In modern times the fashion industry yields a wonderful array of designs from Fortuny, Balenciaga, Poiret, and Schiaparelli, among others.

A dazzling selection of illustrations, many drawn from private collections, reveals silk's omnipresence in couture and decoration, carpets, embroidery, and even painting. Complete with a detailed reference section that includes terms and technical processes, collecting and care, galleries and museums, and a bibliography, *The Book of Silk* will appeal to anyone interested in history, fashion, and beauty.

274 illustrations, 180 in color



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