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« Batik »

Although Man fairly rapidly achieved a certain degree of perfection in the art of weaving, he had to travel a long and difficult road before acquiring mastery of the art of hand-printing. The development of this art can be traced back to the processes known as « batik », which have come down to us, almost unchanged, from the earliest civilizations.

What is « batik » in reality?

It is a very ancient method of printing fabrics which originated in the Dutch East Indies, and more particularly in Java. « Batik » used generally to be practised by women who learnt to reproduce specified designs so skilfully, that this handicraft soon obtained world-wide recognition and became one of the most important of Javanese crafts.

There are several stages in the process of « batik » printing. The first operation is that of spreading a liquid wax over both sides of all parts of the fabric — usually cotton — not to be dyed. The parts covered with wax thus remain impermeable to the dyes, which can only adhere to the non-waxed surfaces. After the dye has been applied, the fabric is plunged in a bath of boiling water which melts the wax ; the first colour effect having thus been obtained, the process is repeated as many times as there are colours to be reproduced in the design.

The best-known Javanese « batik » products are : the *sarong*, the typical native garment, worn by men, women and children alike. It is a strip of cloth



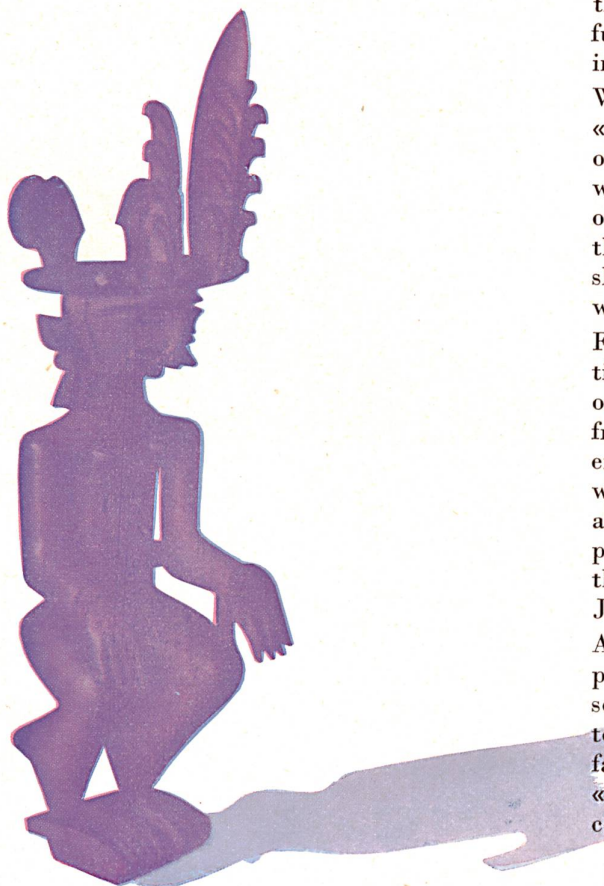
Reichenbach & Co., St. Gall.

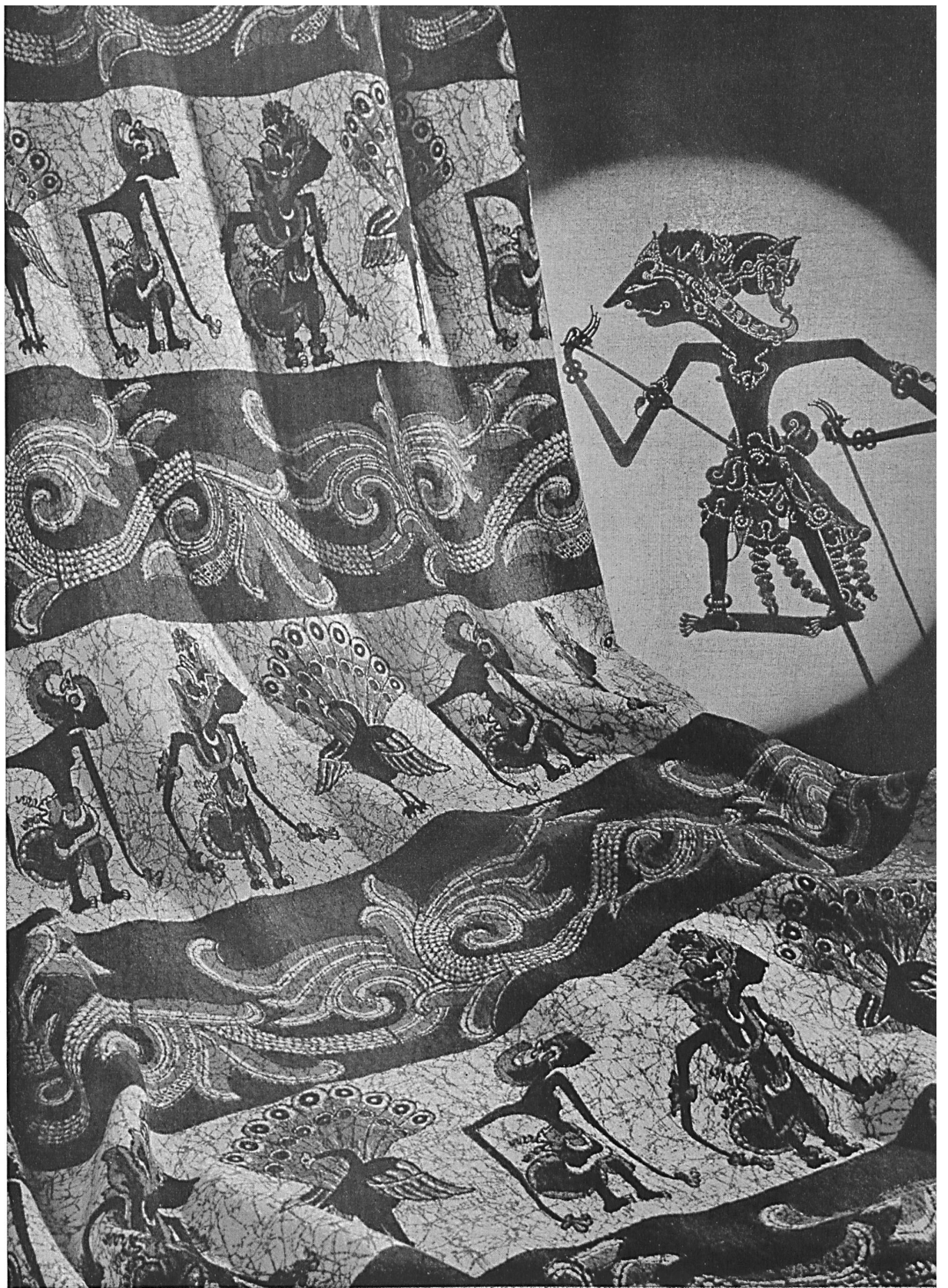
Javanese girl at work on batik.
Javanesa estampando un tejido
« batik ».

wound round the body and which, gathered in graceful folds in front, falls from waist to ankle. According to their social rank, the Malay islanders also wear a head-dress consisting of a skilfully knotted « batik » scarf of design and colouring corresponding to those of the garment.

When she goes out, the well-dressed Javanese woman dons a « batik » *slendang*, a kind of oblong shawl, which she wears with one corner thrown gracefully over her shoulder ; and as she walks with dainty, supple lilt, she toys coquettishly with the other end of her shawl. However, the native woman also uses the *slendang* for other, more practical purposes ; for instance, she carries her child about in it, or uses it as a shopping bag, while working-girls employ it to drag or carry heavy burdens. From what source does this richly varied art draw its inspiration? Primarily, from native flower and animal life, which offers an exuberant, inexhaustible wealth of ideas. Secondly, from *mythology*, with all its fascinating poesy abundantly expressed in the Javanese « Wajang » silhouette plays, in which gods and heroes appear in fantastic dramas that arouse an almost fanatical enthusiasm in the heart of the native population. The « Wajang » silhouettes are also to be found in the form of ornamental designs on many other products of Javanese arts and crafts.

And so, the art of « batik » has come down to us from a far distant past, handed on by a nation endowed with a very well-developed sense of beauty. The idea of « batik » has been adopted by modern technique, but its character has been left intact. Today, « batik » fabrics — as clearly demonstrated by the « Recojava » and « Recobali » creations — express that love of originality common to all exotic products.





Reichenbach & Co., St. Gall, showing a selection of Javanese Wayangs (puppet-play figures), in their RECOJAVA and RECOBALI series, a perfect imitation of batik technique (100 % staple fibre).

Reichenbach & Cía. de S. Gall presentan una magnífica colección de estampados « batik », series RECOJAVA y RECOBALI, inspirada en los célebres Wajang (figuras de ombras javanesas). — 100 % fibrana.

Photo Guggenbühl.

**Mechanische Seidenstoffweberei,
Winterthur.**

Rayon double mesh Ottoman silk
for tailormades.

Heavy staple fibre linen for
summer tailormades and sports
wear.

Large dog-tooth check in rayon
with twisted yarn effect, for
jackets and tailormades.

Otomán de rayón, con doble
urdimbre, para trajes sastre.

Pesada tela de lana artificial para
trajes sastre de verano y ropa de
deporte.

Pesado « Pied-de-poule » de rayón
hilo retorcido, para chaquetas y
trajes sastre.

Photo Droz.

A.-G. A. & R. Moos, Weisslingen.

Modern monochrome design on heavy quality
staple fibre fabric.

A distinctive hand-printed eight-colour design on a
heavy staple fibre fabric. Irregular weave effect.

A fine hand-printed three-colour design in local
rustic style.

Estampado monocromo sobre lana artificial de
calidad superior.

Dibujo original, estampado a mano en ocho colores
sobre una pesada lana artificial. Efecto de tejeduría
irregular ; trama aparente.

Estampado a mano en tres colores ; estilo del país.

Photo Bauty.





Emil Anderegg Ltd., St. Gall.

Above: Mixture fabric for interior decoration.
Left: Knotted cotton marquissette.

Middle: Fancy cotton voile.

Right: Printed cotton voile.

Arriba: Tela para mueblaje (Tejido mezclado),
estampado.

A la izquierda: Marquiseta «noppé» (Tejido de
algodón).

En el centro: Velo fantasía (Tejido de algodón).

A la derecha: Velo estampado (Tejido de algodón).

F. Blumer & Cie., Schwanden.

Hand-printed pure silk squares.

Pañoletas cuadradas, estampadas a mano,
de pura seda.

Photo Droz.

