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KNOWLEDGE OF THINGS:
REASSESSING THE INDIGENOUS
AMERICAN HERITAGE IN ITALY

Fondazione “Antonio Ratti”

Via Per Cernobbio 19, 22100 Como

Form compiled by Sara Russo (Head of Conservation) and Maddalena Terragni (Head of the Textile Collection and Activities)

Introduction

The textile collection of the Fondazione Antonio Ratti is one of the most important in Italy. Started in the 1950s by Antonio Ratti as a source of inspiration for his textiles, it continues to expand and fascinate new generations of creatives.

The collection is a unique resource that tells the textile histories of different continents and periods, from the third to the twentieth century. Today it comprises more than 3,300 textile fragments. Among its most significant nuclei are Coptic and Indigenous American textiles, Italian velvets, Indian and European cashmere shawls, French silks, Congolese Kuba textiles, Central Asian ikat garments, printed Alsatian cottons and Japanese kimonos. In addition, 3,000 sample books illustrate French and Italian industrial textile production over the last two centuries. A special section is dedicated to the history of local silk production in Como and preserves the first designs of the founder, Antonio Ratti.

In 1998 the FAR collection became accessible to the public thanks to a digitisation and cataloguing project and to a rich programme of exhibitions, publications and guided tours. Since then the collection has grown thanks to important donations and acquisitions and is today a point of reference for scholars, designers and students. Its

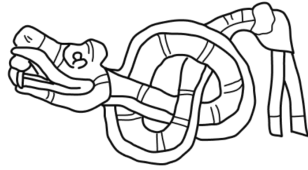
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mission, today as in the past, is expressed in the words of Antonio Ratti: “In my life I have always found inspiration for my creativity in museums. I want others to be able to enjoy the same experience.”

The American collections of the Fondazione Antonio Ratti are two: one acquired by Antonio Ratti in 2002 and the other received through the donation of the collection of Seth Siegelaub in 2022.

Cultural Areas (tags)

Central and Southern Andes

Collections

#01

<i>Name of the collection</i>	Indigenous American textiles
<i>Collector</i>	Ratti, Antonio; Alvigini, Giuseppe
<i>Cultural areas</i>	Central and Southern Andes
<i>Ethnic group / community / cultural context</i>	Nasca (Peru) Wari (Peru) Chimú (Peru) Chancay (Peru) Ica-Chincha (Peru) Inka (Peru)

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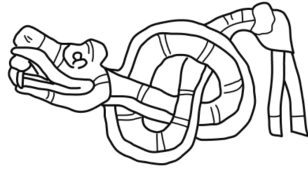
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<i>Description of the Collection</i>	A group of 33 textile artefacts from Peru, belonging to the Nasca, Wari, Chimú, Ica-Chincha, Chancay and Inka cultures. The fragments are examples of two weaving techniques, plain weave and tapestry, and are made mainly of cotton (warp) and camelid wool (weft). They date from AD 200 to AD 1532.
<i>History of the collection</i>	In 2002 Antonio Ratti acquired the textile collection of Giuseppe Alvigini, from Biella, supplier of cashmere yarn to Ratti S.p.A.; Alvigini had assembled the collection during the 1980s.
<i>Online Database</i>	<p>The catalogue records compiled by Antonio Aimi in February 2002 are preserved in the digital vault of the Foundation. Personal access can be requested by writing to archiviotessile@fondazioneratti.org</p> <p>https://far.caveaudigitale.com/cerca?filtro=common%7Cd6cbace2772c70b220254d017598a656%7C%2FManifattura%2FAMERICHE&filtro=common%7C472c5f87197ddd0e6425eaff1d63dd68%7CPer%2FManifattura%2FAMERICHE%2FPer%2F&view=auigrid&table=objects&sort=on&page=1</p>
<i>Web page</i>	<p>Short description on the website of the Fondazione Antonio Ratti:</p> <p>https://far-staging.vercel.app/it/collezione-tessile/1</p>

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Bibliography

#02

<i>Name of the collection</i>	Seth Siegelau pre-Columbian textile collection
<i>Collector</i>	Siegelau, Seth
<i>Cultural areas</i>	Central and Southern Andes
<i>Ethnic group / community / cultural context</i>	Wari (Peru) Tiwanaku (Peru) Chimú (Peru) Chancay (Peru) Inka (Peru)
<i>Description of the Collection</i>	The collection comprises 11 textile artefacts, 25 small fragments, 2 coca-leaf bags and 2 headdresses from Peru, belonging to the Tiwanaku, Wari, Chimú, Chancay and Inka cultures. They cover a time span from 100 BC to AD 1500.
<i>History of the collection</i>	The collection of Peruvian textiles was assembled by Seth Siegelau between 1993 and 2012 through travels, private collectors, dealers and auction houses. It was acquired by the Foundation in July 2022.

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Online Database	<p>The records compiled by Seth Siegelau and Emmy De Groot are preserved in the digital vault of the Fondazione Antonio Ratti. Personal access can be requested by writing to archiviotessile@fondazioneratti.org</p> <p>https://far.caveaudigitale.com/cerca?filtro=common%7Cd6cbace2772c70b220254d017598a656%7C%2FManifattura%2FAMERICHE&filtro=common%7C472c5f87197ddd0e6425eaff1d63dd68%7CPer%C3%B9%7C%2FManifattura%2FAMERICHE%2FPer%C3%B9&view=auigrid&table=objects&sort=on&page=0</p>
Web page	<p>Short description on the FAR website:</p> <p>https://far-staging.vercel.app/it/progetti/seth-siegelau</p>
Bibliography	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Siegelau, S. 1997. <i>Bibliographica Textilia Historiae</i>. New York: International General.

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