



Ait Bou Ichaouen: Weavings of a Nomadic Berber Tribe

Alfred H. Saulniers, Suzanne S. Saulniers

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Aït Bou Ichaouen presents the beauty and diversity of textiles from a small Moroccan tribe whose weavings are unlike those found elsewhere. Living in an isolated area that was unknown to the carpet world until 1997, the women who wove these textiles boldly used colors in striking motifs. Many of their designs and techniques have not been identified elsewhere in Morocco.

These women regularly invented motifs to record key events in the tribe's history. They wove Moroccan War Rugs in memory of the twenty-six-year struggle against French domination.

Their newly invented designs join many traditional carpet and textile motifs, some of which go back to the Bronze Age or earlier. These archaic designs reflect an older North African weaving tradition now almost entirely lost. In their isolation, the women of the tribe preserved an important part of the world's textile heritage while showing an ability to adapt to changing events.

The Saulniers have collected Moroccan pile rugs, flatweaves, and other textiles since 1975. From their collection, Aït Bou Ichaouen presents 100 carefully selected weavings that originate in the pre-Saharan foothills on the eastern slopes of the High Atlas Mountains.

Aït Bou Ichaouen also includes a rigorous structural analysis of each textile and a comprehensive appendix on the weaving techniques employed by the tribe's weavers.

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