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Melinda Watt, Curator, Art Institute of Chicago
Textile Treasures in the Art Institute of Chicago

This lecture focuses on highlights of the Art Institute's renowned textile collection of more than 13,000 textiles and 66,000 sample swatches ranging from 300 BC to the present. In addition to Pre-Columbian textiles, European vestments, tapestries, woven silks and velvets,

printed fabrics, needlework, and lace the department has strong holdings in 16th- and 17th-century English needlework, printed and woven materials of the 18th and 19th centuries, American quilts and woven coverlets, Eastern textiles, and 20th-century fiber art.

Melinda Watt is Chair and Curator of Textiles at the Art Institute. She previously worked at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, most recently as Curator in the Department of European Decorative Arts and Sculpture and supervising curator for the Antonio Ratti Textile Center where she oversaw exhibitions, research, and collections management for over 16,000 Western European textiles and 500 fans and led one of the largest, most technically advanced facilities for the study and storage of textiles in the world.

