



Cashmere: A French Passion 1800-1880

Monique Lévi-Strauss

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A revised and expanded edition of Monique Lévi-Strauss's classic 1987 book on French cashmere shawls with superb photographs and a wealth of archive material

The delicate beauty of the cashmere shawl was first brought to Europe by the East India Companies and Napoleon's campaigns. Woven in Kashmir, its fabric was so light that, according to legend, a whole shawl could be passed through a finger ring. Exquisite and expensive, by the nineteenth century these shawls were highly sought-after in France; enterprising French manufacturers soon saw that there was a market for more accessibly priced versions and started to create their own.

Here is the story of French cashmere shawls of the nineteenth century. At first, the shawl-makers strove to imitate the traditional hand-made designs using modern techniques of mass production, but then they began to explore and innovate. As weaving technology evolved, motifs grew increasingly complex, expanding from the decorative borders and extending across the whole surface of the shawl and filling it with jewel-like colors. 298 illustrations, 268 in color

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