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From about 1840 onwards, batiks found their way from what was called the Netherlands East Indies, then under Dutch colonial rule, to the Netherlands, where they were kept in private and public collections. Owing to Holland's great interest in Batik, Amsterdam's Tropenmuseum now owns a collection of over 3000 pieces. Many represent the major batik centres that emerged on Java, Madura and Sumatra. Batiks tell the stories of their maker, their wearers and eventual collectors. By studying the history of individual pieces from their creation to their arrival in the Tropenmuseum, we can relate them to their shared history. Batik became a product of intercultural contact in a society where different ethnic groups lived next to or with each other. This book focuses on this communication, on batiks as visual witnesses of cultural encounter within the East but also between the East and the West. This book will appeal to anyone interested in Indonesian arts and textiles. It is a rich source of study for scholars interested in the art of batik and the society in which it developed to its high level of perfection.

About the Author I. van Hout is Curator Textiles Section of the Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam.