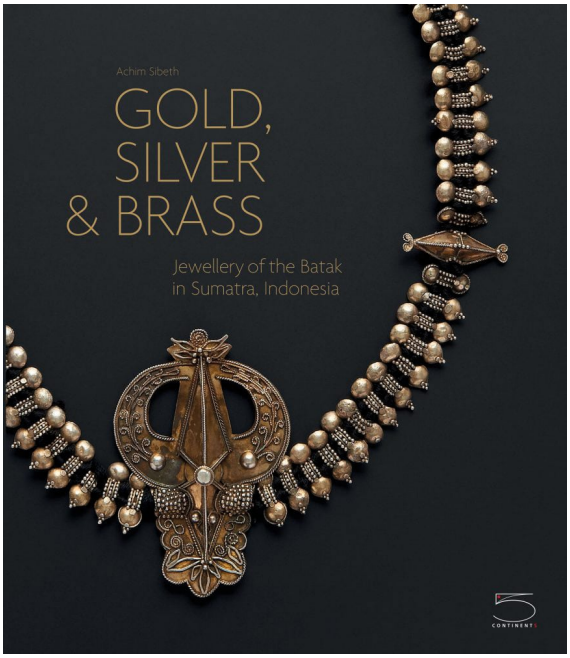
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Gold, Silver & Brass

Jewellery of the Batak in Sumatra, Indonesia

Achim Sibeth

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- The nearly 300 precious works shown here are artifacts of a once-flourishing jewellery tradition

The first book to examine the rich jewellery traditions of the Batak people in Indonesia is a gorgeous tribute to a vanishing way of life. Batak jewellery is characterised by a wide variety of materials and forms, and has many functions: Jewels can be status symbols, badges of rank, attributes of membership of a certain age group, amulets and talismans, or simply ornaments. Men, women, small children, and even babies were once adorned with gold, silver, brass, bronze, or the gold-and-copper alloy known as suasa. Today, the Batak wear traditional jewellery only for celebrations like weddings, and these stunning works are rapidly disappearing, being melted down or sold.

Achim Sibeth is a former curator of the Southeast Asian collection at the Museum of World Cultures in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. Since April 2010, he has been the curator and chief editor of the Mandala Foundation in Singapore.

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