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Fowler Museum at UCLA Receives Donation of Krauss Collection of Japanese Textiles



Fabric for futon cover (detail),
with battleship motif

The Fowler Museum at UCLA has been given a donation of an important collection of Japanese textiles from Dr. Jeffrey Krauss of Potomac, Maryland. The collection consists of 201 examples of *e-gasuri*, or “pictures made with the *kasuri* technique,” dating from the early 19th–mid 20th centuries. Most are pieces of fabric intended for futon covers, but the collection also includes *kimono*, *bōzugappa* (capas), *maekake* (aprons), *yogi* (kimono-shaped bed coverlets) and *tan* (rolled bolts of cloth).

The donated textiles feature intricate *kasuri* patterns, created by an exacting process of separately resist-dyeing both the warp and weft yarns, a process also known as “double-ikat.” The yarns are then woven into fabric, producing white pictorial images on an indigo-dyed ground. While cotton is the most common fiber, the collection also includes many beautiful examples of older cloths made of ramie fiber.

This new collection nearly doubles the size of the museum’s existing holdings of Japanese textiles, making the Fowler Museum an important destination for scholars of Japan’s textile arts. As Roy Hamilton, the Fowler Museum’s curator of Asian and Pacific collections explains, “Dr. Krauss became fascinated with issues of design in textile arts and noted that Japanese *kasuri* had received relatively little attention from American collectors. Working over a period of years, he assembled a comprehensive sampling of *e-gasuri* patterns, which essentially forms a systematic encyclopedia of *kasuri* design.”

The patterns range from traditional icons like the Buddhist wish-fulfilling jewel (*nyoi hoju*) or the beloved sake imps (*shōjō*) of the Noh theater, to frankly propagandistic images of warplanes on a boy’s kimono of WWII vintage. A selection of works from the collection will be loaned to the Morikami Museum in Delray Beach, Florida, for an exhibition there in 2010.

“As I collected these textiles,” Krauss recounts, “I learned about the auspicious symbols and the Japanese legends woven into them, as well as the technically complex dyeing and weaving process used in their creation. But now it's time to share that learning rather than keeping it folded up on my shelves. As a research institution, the Fowler Museum holds a unique position in disseminating knowledge about other cultures, and I am pleased that the Fowler has agreed to be the vehicle for that sharing. I look forward to visiting the collection often.”

The Fowler Museum at UCLA explores art and material culture primarily from Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and the Americas, past and present. The Museum's collections comprise more than 150,000 objects, including more than 10,000 textiles that trace the history of cloth over two millennia and across five continents, making the Fowler a major repository for the textile arts. The Museum is open Wednesdays through Sundays, from noon to 5 p.m.; and on Thursdays, from noon until 8 p.m. The museum is closed Mondays and Tuesdays. The Fowler Museum, part of UCLA's School of the Arts and Architecture, is located in the north part of the UCLA campus. Admission is free. Parking is available for a maximum of \$9 in Lot 4. For more information, the public may call 310/825-4361 or visit fowler.ucla.edu.

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