

Structure and surface : contemporary Japanese textiles : November 12, 1998 to January 26, 1999

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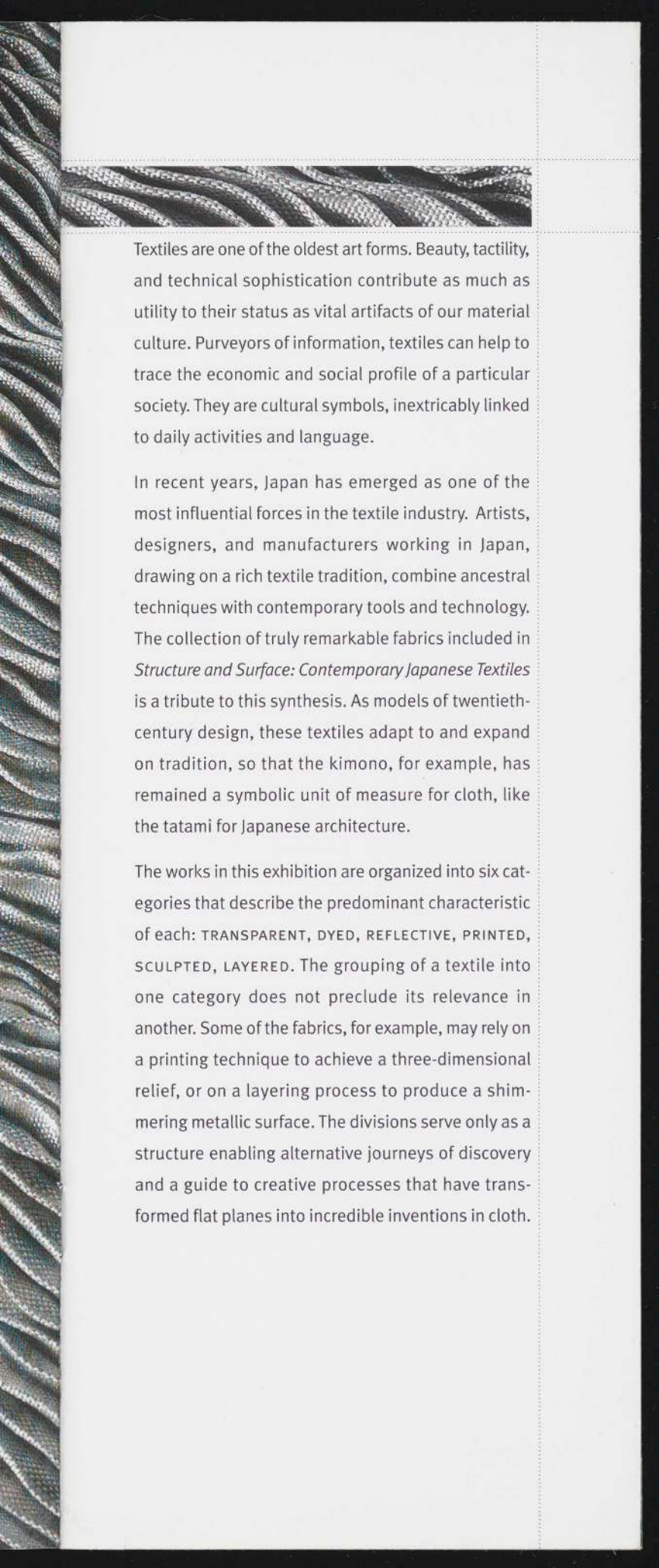


S T R U C T U R E
Contemporary Japanese Textiles
a n d S U R F A C E

November 12, 1998 to January 26, 1999
THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK

JUNICHI ARAI
BRIDGESTONE METALPHA CORP.
SHEILA HICKS
INOUE PLEATS COMPANY, LTD.
AKIKO ISHIGAKI
AKIHIRO KANEKO
YOSHIHIRO KIMURA
NAOMI KOBAYASHI
JÜRGEN LEHL
CHIAKI MAKI
KAORI MAKI
MAKIKO MINAGAWA
OSAMU MITA
ISSEY MIYAKE
EIJI MIYAMOTO
YUH OKANO
KEIJI OTANI
SAKASE ADTECH CO., LTD.
HIROYUKI SHINDO
REIKO SUDO
TOSHIKO TAIRA
HIDEKO TAKAHASHI
CHIYOKO TANAKA
JUN TOMITA
TORAY INDUSTRIES, INC.
MICHIKO UEHARA
URASE CO., LTD.
MASAJI YAMAZAKI
KOICHI YOSHIMURA





Textiles are one of the oldest art forms. Beauty, tactility, and technical sophistication contribute as much as utility to their status as vital artifacts of our material culture. Purveyors of information, textiles can help to trace the economic and social profile of a particular society. They are cultural symbols, inextricably linked to daily activities and language.

In recent years, Japan has emerged as one of the most influential forces in the textile industry. Artists, designers, and manufacturers working in Japan, drawing on a rich textile tradition, combine ancestral techniques with contemporary tools and technology. The collection of truly remarkable fabrics included in *Structure and Surface: Contemporary Japanese Textiles* is a tribute to this synthesis. As models of twentieth-century design, these textiles adapt to and expand on tradition, so that the kimono, for example, has remained a symbolic unit of measure for cloth, like the tatami for Japanese architecture.

The works in this exhibition are organized into six categories that describe the predominant characteristic of each: TRANSPARENT, DYED, REFLECTIVE, PRINTED, SCULPTED, LAYERED. The grouping of a textile into one category does not preclude its relevance in another. Some of the fabrics, for example, may rely on a printing technique to achieve a three-dimensional relief, or on a layering process to produce a shimmering metallic surface. The divisions serve only as a structure enabling alternative journeys of discovery and a guide to creative processes that have transformed flat planes into incredible inventions in cloth.



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Transparent

Transparency implies both a literal and metaphorical lightness. Sometimes this lightness is achieved through the blending of different fibers, especially with the advent of new, lightweight synthetic yarns whose strength is exponentially greater than yarns ten times their weight. Alternately this quality is the hallmark of centuries-old traditional methods that use only organic materials, such as silk, to create something gossamer like a spider web. The fabrics in this section have been made transparent not only through their material but also their structure. The *Tire Cord Fabric* by Toray Industries, Inc., for example, is loosely woven to allow greater flexibility when employed as a reinforcement within tires, and the *Encircling Fishing Net*, also by Toray, uses a knotless technique that interlocks the polyester yarn through heat to form the mesh. Reiko Sudo's *Shutter*, a fabric that she claims was inspired by the rolling steel shutters on storefronts, is made by sewing meandering strips of nylon tape onto a soluble-base fabric that is then dissolved leaving behind colored tendrils.

TORAY INDUSTRIES, INC.

Encircling Fishing Net. 1996

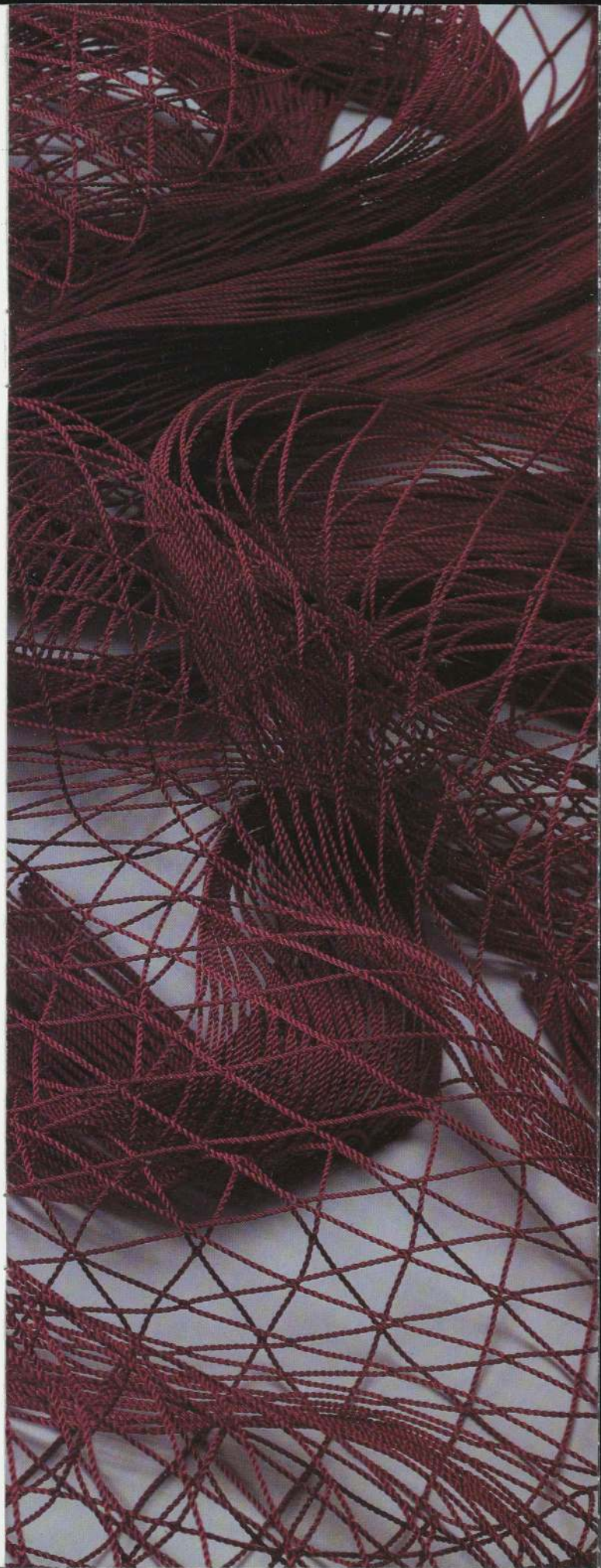
Tetoron polyester,
variable width (1½" contracted/132" expanded) x 278"
(3.8/335.3 x 706.1 cm)

MFR.: Toray Industries Inc., Tokyo;

also Nitto Seimo Co., Ltd., Tokyo

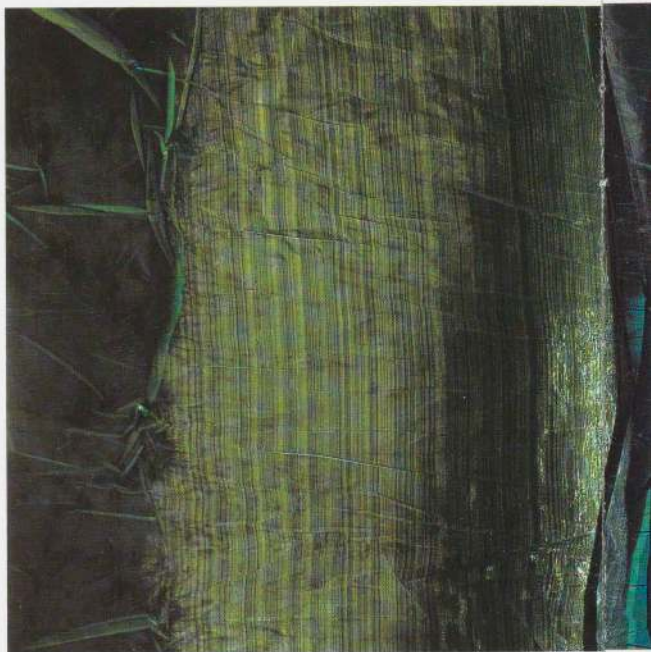
Collection The Museum of Modern Art, New York

Gift of Toray Industries, Inc.





Reflective



Reflective surfaces can be achieved in a variety of ways—from technical dyeing processes to the use of actual metallic yarns. Historically, gold or metal leaf, for example, would be twisted around an inner silk or paper yarn to form the metallic thread that was then woven into or embroidered on a cloth surface. In the twentieth century, with the advent of synthetic fibers, there are less expensive ways to make metallic yarns. In the most commonly used method, a single-ply polyester film is metallicized on one side by means of a vacuum deposit of aluminum. A clear or tinted lacquer is applied to both sides of the film and then slit into

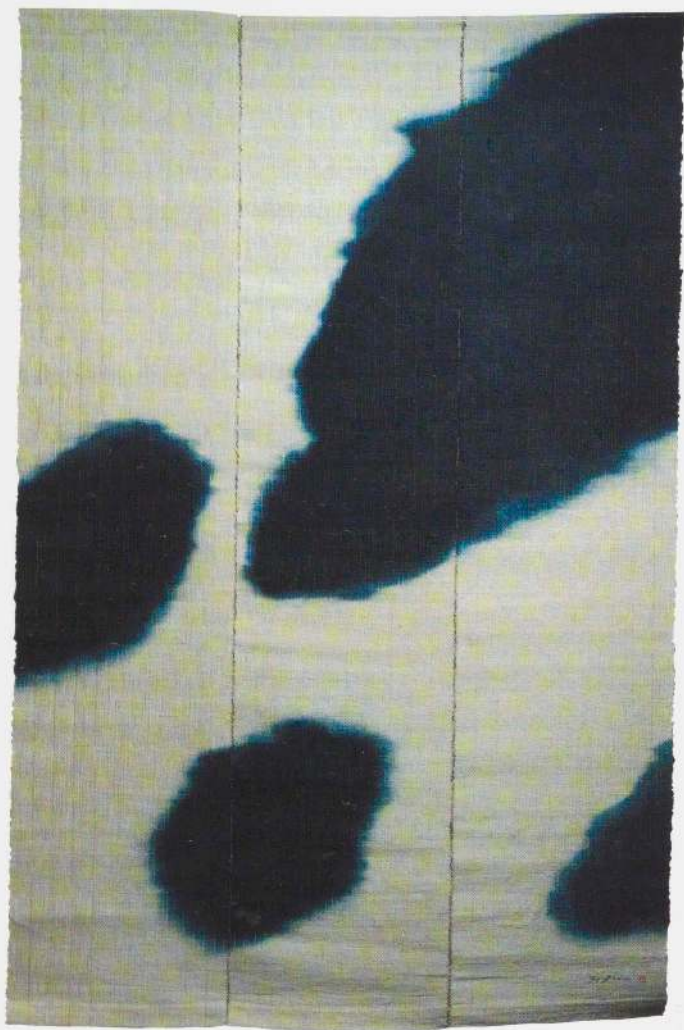


thin strips to make a kind of thread called polyester slit film. Junichi Arai's *Deep Sea* is a fabric woven using polyester slit film that is then subjected to a technique called "melt-off," which dissolves some of the metallic thread, leaving behind a transparent cloth. The fabric is heat-transfer printed, a process which transfers colors to the surface of the fabric by high temperature. Exposing the fabric numerous times to this transfer print process, extraordinary patterns and textures can accumulate successively, along with overlapping layers of color and permanently pleated wrinkles.

JUNICHI ARAI
Deep Sea. 1994

Polyester and aluminum,
42 x 216" (106.7 x 548.6 cm)

MFR.: Kay Tay, Fukui; also Oike Industrial Co., Ltd., Kyoto
Collection The Saint Louis Art Museum. Gift of the designer





Dyed

The subtle variation of color achieved by dyeing in contemporary Japanese textiles is a pure revelation. Dyers have an almost spiritual devotion to transforming yarn or cloth into extensions of their perceptions of earth, water, and sky through color. No other color is more associated with Japan than the deep blue of *ai*, or indigo. Introduced from South China in the eighth century, the indigo plant was grown widely in Japan and soon became the most sought after dyestuff. Indigo dyer Hiroyuki Shindo explains his *Space Panel* with the word *okkochi*, which means "the eastern wind" and, when spoken, also suggests "to let fall." It describes a kind of dyeing technique developed in Japan over 300 years ago. The story of its origin claims that a wind from the east blew just a corner of kimono fabric into a vat of indigo. From this incident, a new kind of shaped dyeing was born that was less methodical than traditional *shibori* tie-dye resist and more reflective of the patterns of nature.

HIROYUKI SHINDO

Space Panel. 1993

Cotton, hemp and indigo-dyed,

48½ x 74" (123.8 x 188 cm)

Collection Sheila Hicks



Printed



The tradition of printing has always involved the mechanical transferring of characters or patterns to a surface using inked type, blocks, or plates. Conventionally the process has a visual rather than tactile effect. Immediate associations with the technique in Japan are the two-dimensional representational images of the landscape or plants and flowers that adorn clothing. Expectations about printing are drastically altered, however, when one discovers that printing inks have been replaced with chemicals and adhesives, and rusted metal can be used as a printing implement. Screen-printing combined with heating, shrinking, or other finishing processes can further achieve unusual three-dimensional surfaces. The tactility of Sudo's *Scattered Rubber Bands* results from the acrylic and silicone swirls that reinterpret this motif on cloth. In Sudo's *Scrapyard* series, barbed wire, nails and iron plates are rusted and become the printing tools for cloth. Different patterns can be formed simply by varying the placement of the metal scraps and the length of the weathering time.

REIKO SUDO

Scattered Rubber Bands. 1997

Linen, acrylic, and silicone,

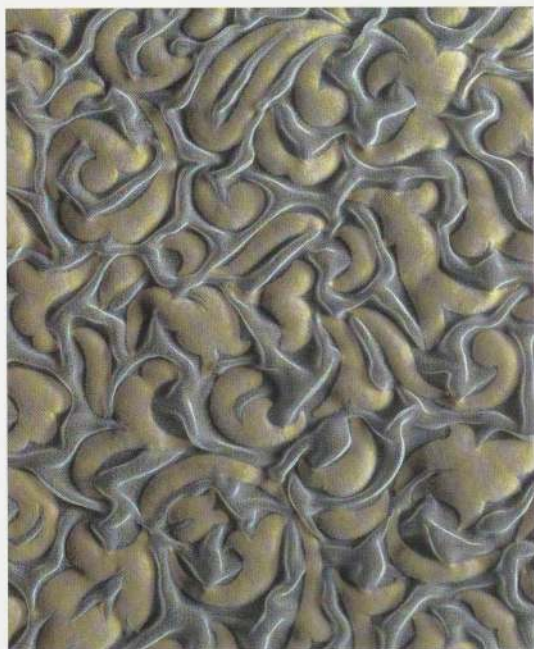
44 $\frac{1}{16}$ " (111.9 cm) wide

Mfr.: Nuno Corporation, Tokyo; also Umetani Craft, Kyoto



Sculpted

Any material that has the ability to be molded or shaped in a particular way can be sculpted—stone is chiseled, metal is cast, clay is thrown or modeled. When cloth surfaces are sculpted, highly articulated individual landscapes are formed by experimenting with and manipulating the innate behavior of specific yarns. In Yoshihiro Kimura's *Pedocal* polyester chiffon is affixed to a base of a stretched knitted fabric. An acrylic binder (adhesive) screenprinted in a pattern permeates the fabrics, causing them to join. Minute rayon fibers are affixed to this binder and with an electric charge (flocking) are made to stand vertically. The knit fabric that had been stretched during this whole process is loosened again, leaving the double-layered cloth puckered and covered with crevices.



YOSHIHIRO KIMURA

Pedocal. 1996

Nylon, polyurethane, polyester, and rayon,
44" (111.8 cm) wide

MFR.: Kimura Senko Co., Ltd., Shiga



Layered

A precedent for layering in Japanese textiles and fashion can be found in the evolution of the kimono when, historically, women of high rank wore ten or more layers of robes. The layers varied in cut and color, each carefully chosen to offset and complement one another, with all the superimpositions visible at the neck, front, and sleeve openings. No other fashion and textile design team in Japan has used layering techniques more effectively to create dynamic three-dimensional work than Issey Miyake with Makiko Minagawa. The garments in Miyake's recent *Prism* series are made by layering pieces of different fabrics, such as polyester chiffon and nonwoven batting, on a wool base cloth creating a collage of materials. The fabrics are then joined together with the base cloth by needlepunching—needles punch through a web of materials entangling the fibers—making the collage elements intertwine and become transparent, leaving only blurred outlines of the original pieces.

ISSEY MIYAKE

TEXTILE DIRECTOR: MAKIKO MINAGAWA

Prism Series: Coat. 1997

Wool, polyester chiffon, and batting

MFR.: Issey Miyake Inc., Tokyo

Collection Miyake Design Studio





All of these artists, designers, and manufacturers exemplify a commitment to a long Japanese tradition of combining technology of the hand with the creative spirit of the mind. A direct outgrowth has been the extraordinary beauty that each work embodies, regardless of function. A fishing net or tire cord fabric can fulfill aesthetic expectations about transparency as readily as the finest silk weaving, and the ominously rich blue of indigo can be attained through both natural and synthetic means. These fabrics perpetuate the modern spirit by maintaining a seamless flow between beauty and function, past and present. The ability to do so insures their timelessness and value to our visual world.

Matilda McQuaid, Associate Curator

DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN

Public Programs

The following programs will be held in conjunction with the exhibition
Structure and Surface: Contemporary Japanese Textiles:

Film Screenings

Basho to Spun Steel: Contemporary Japanese Textile Design traces the creative process of the most innovative fiber and fabric designers in Japan today. From traditional banana fiber cloth (*basho-fu*) to spun stainless steel thread, the textiles represent both traditional and revolutionary textile techniques in major centers. Among the artists and designers included in the film are Junichi Arai, Reiko Sudo, Chiaki and Kaori Maki, Akiko and Kinsei Ishigaki, Living National Treasure Toshiko Taira, Eiji Miyamoto, and the foremost industrial manufacturer, Bridgestone Metalpha Corporation. Directed by Cristobal Zañartu and Produced by Rebecca Clark. 58 minutes

*Friday, January 22, 1999, 6:00 p.m.
Sunday, January 24, 1999, 2:00 p.m.
The Roy and Niuta Titus Theater 2
Free with museum admission

*This screening will be introduced by the film's Director and its Producer. It will be followed by a question and answer session.

Symposium

Contemporary Japanese Textiles: From Tradition to the Avant-garde. Join an international roster of leading fiber artists, textile designers, scholars and curators as they examine the world of contemporary textiles from traditional techniques to the latest computer technology and materials.

Saturday, November 14 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
At the Japan Society, 333 East 47 Street, New York City.

Admission: Members of MoMA and the Japan Society \$40, nonmembers \$55, students \$20. For tickets, please call the Japan Society at 212-752-3015.

For more information about Public Programs please call the Department of Education 212-708-9781.

Publication

Structure and Surface: Contemporary Japanese Textiles. By Cara McCarty and Matilda McQuaid. 8 3/4 x 12". 104 pp.; 100 ills., 67 in color. Specially bound in featured textile. \$24. 95.



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Cover: YOSHIHIRO KIMURA, *Pedocal*, 1996 (detail)

Cover flap: ISSEY MIYAKE, TEXTILE DIRECTOR: MAKIKO MINAGAWA, *Prism Series: Coat*, 1997 (detail)

Inside cover: INOUE PLEATS CO., LTD. *Crystal 2*, 1997
Polyester, 59" (149.9 cm) wide MFR.: Inoue Pleats Co., Ltd., Fukui

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