

Rimono

REFASHIONING
CONTEMPORARY
STYLE



JAPONISM IN ART

In 1853, U.S. Naval Commodore Matthew Perry sailed his ships into the port of Uraga, ending Japan's *sakoku*—a period of self-imposed isolation that had begun in 1633. With the opening of the country to the West came an interest in all things Japanese, a craze known as Japonism. Soon after, goods from the island nation began to appear in shops in London and Paris. Japanese art was introduced to a wider audience at world's fairs like the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1867.

Western artists were among the earliest collectors of Japonism. Collecting everything from *ukiyo-e* (woodblock prints), lacquerware and ceramics to textiles and *kimono*, artists like James McNeil Whistler and James Tissot often incorporated these Japanese objects into their paintings. This stunning gray-blue silk crepe *kimono*—decorated with blossoming trees, peonies, hills, waterfalls, bamboo, clouds and *komainu* (lion-dogs), is an excellent example of the type of *kimono* collected by Western artists. While not the same garment, it is very similar to the robe represented in the painting of a *Girl in a Japanese Costume* by William Merritt Chase. Like many of his peers and patrons, Chase was an avid collector of Japanese art and design.



Japan, *Kimono*, mid 19th century, silk, metallic thread, Cincinnati Art Museum, Gift of Edward Senior, 1974.16



William Merritt Chase (1849–1916), United States, *Girl in a Japanese Costume* (detail), circa 1890, oil on canvas, Brooklyn Museum, Gift of Isabella S. Kurtz in memory of Charles M. Kurtz, 86.197.2

JAPONISM IN FASHION

In the 1870s and 1880s, many Parisian couturiers were inspired by Japanese art and design. While enthralled with the silhouette and surface decoration of *kimono*, designers still had a fashionable clientele who were not yet prepared to incorporate the loose cut into their wardrobe. Looking to marry Western style and the Japanese aesthetic, designers would sometimes disassemble a *kimono*, using the luxurious silk fabric to create a garment more to the liking of a Western audience.

An excellent example of the creative reuse of *kimono* fabric is this *Dress* by the Misses Turner who were court dress makers from about 1875. Created from a single *kosode* (small sleeve *kimono*), the bodice and overskirt are stunning with examples of Japanese motifs like chrysanthemums, peonies, fans and wisteria.



Back Detail



Misses Turner Court Dress Makers (active late 19th century), England (London), *Dress*, circa 1876–78, silk, metallic thread, © The Kyoto Costume Institute, AC8938 93-28-1AB, Photo by Richard Haughton

JAPONISM IN FASHION: SURFACE MOTIFS

Created twenty years apart, two striking examples of outerwear skillfully capture the use of Japanese motifs in surface decoration. In the *Coat (Visite)* from 1890, designers used the appliqué technique in which intricate decorations were woven into a separate piece of silk fabric and then applied to the cashmere garment. The use of appliqué allowed the adoption of Japanese motifs—a *hiōgi* (folding fan), *sakura* (cherry blossoms) and *kabuto* (samurai helmets)—onto a Western design without the need to alter the garment's construction.

The *Evening Coat* from the museum's collection, circa 1910, adopts not only Japanese surface decoration found on many *kimono*, it also draws inspiration from the garment's form. The loose silhouette and wide dolman sleeve are much like the wide sleeves and straight cut found in many *kosode* of the early twentieth century. Crafted from intricately woven silk, the coat is decorated with an East-meets-West style that combines Japanese chrysanthemums and Western-style scrolling leaves and berries.



Possibly House of Worth (est. 1858), France, *Coat (Visite)*, circa 1890, cashmere, silk, feathers. © The Kyoto Costume Institute, AC5367 86-17-7B, Photo by Richard Haughton



Possibly France, *Evening Coat*, circa 1910, silk, fur, metallic lace, Cincinnati Art Museum, Gift of William Mack, 1943.25

JAPONISM IN FASHION: SILHOUETTE

The turn of the twentieth century brought with it a modern woman searching for greater freedoms and the right to vote. With women on the move, their clothing had to keep pace. No longer interested in the constraining styles of the previous century, couturiers and their clients became more adventurous, embracing the *kimono's* looser silhouette. In general, fabrics became softer and shapes became looser.

By the 1920s, French designers like Paul Poiret and American design houses like E.L. Mayer, Inc. had fully incorporated the *kimono* form into their designs. Look closely at Poiret's *Dress*, tailored to suggest a black *haori* (short coat) worn over a gray *kimono*. One of the first designers to create a garment to be worn without a corset, Poiret drew inspiration from traditional Japanese dress.

Compare the museum's early twentieth century *furisode* (long or 'swinging' sleeves) *Kimono* with Mayer's late 1920s *Evening Dress*. At first glance, a similarity in color is the most evident connection. Upon further inspection, note how the American designer's dress, with long swinging sleeves, drapes on the body and narrows to the ankles, a form fully inspired by the *kimono*.



Paul Poiret (1879–1944), France (Paris), *Dress*, 1920–1930, silk, © The Kyoto Costume Institute, AC11551 2006-17-1AB, Photo by Takashi Hatakeyama



E.L. Mayer, Inc. (1905–31), United States (New York), *Evening Dress*, 1927–28, silk, Cincinnati Art Museum; Gift of Dorette Kruse Fleischmann in memory of Julius Fleischmann, 1991.200



Japan, *Kimono* (detail), early 20th century, silk, Cincinnati Art Museum, A gift from Eleanor Lee Hart's collection of Japanese art, 2005.644

JAPONISM IN FASHION: DRESSING GOWNS

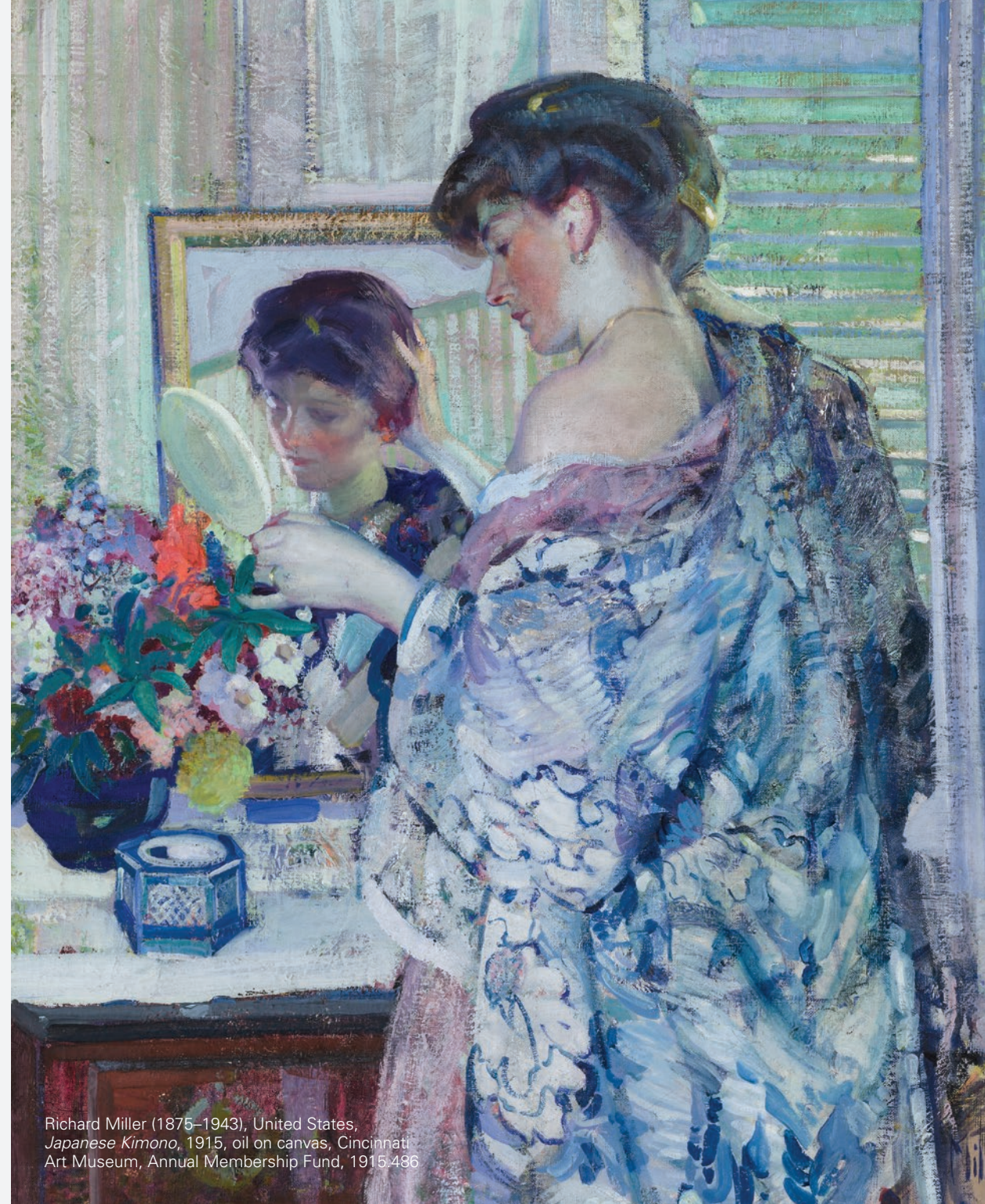
During Japan's 200-year isolation period, the only Westerners allowed into the country were those working for the Dutch East India Company. Through trade, Europeans were introduced to the *kimono* in the seventeenth century. Called *Japonsche rocken*, these garments were first favored by men as dressing gowns. When Japan opened to the West in 1854, the *kimono*, used as a robe, became a popular export from the island nation.

Noticing the popularity in the West of wearing *kimono* as dressing gowns, the Japanese soon began crafting them specifically for trade. During a visit to Japan in 1923, Cincinnati Alice Jones Page likely purchased this *Kimono and Sash*. While it closely resembles a traditional *kimono*, subtle changes have been made, including a shorter length and narrower sash.

The *kimono* worn as a dressing gown also appears in the work of American Impressionist painter, Richard Miller (1875–1943). Primarily a figurative painter, Miller adopted an impressionistic style in his pictures of women, who were often depicted wearing relaxed dress, as in the painting *Japanese Kimono* from 1915.



Japan, *Kimono and Sash*, circa 1923, silk, Cincinnati Art Museum, Gift in memory of Mrs. William Leo Doepke (Ethel Page) by her granddaughter, Sara Doepke, 2012.95a–b



Richard Miller (1875–1943), United States, *Japanese Kimono*, 1915, oil on canvas, Cincinnati Art Museum, Annual Membership Fund, 1915.486

JAPONISM IN FASHION: DESIGN FOR THE MODERN WOMAN

The work of French couturiers, Madeleine Vionnet (1876–1975) and Gabrielle Chanel (1883–1971), are a perfect example of design for the modern woman. During World War I (1914–1918) and after, many women worked away from home to support the war effort. This new role required a new style of dress. Both Vionnet and Chanel looked to the *kimono* as inspiration for their designs. Unlike those before them, who focused on the *kimono's* surface decoration, these designers gravitated to the loose cut of the garment for a new style.

Two gowns from the early 1920s by Vionnet capture her interest in the *kimono* silhouette. In the *Wedding Dress* from 1922, we see her use rectangular panels to create a tube-like shape that drapes attractively on the wearer's form. The inclusion of an *obi*-like draping at the back and the long train is another nod to the *kimono*. Vionnet's *Henriette Evening Dress*, from 1923, further explores the designer's interest in the *kimono* cut. Here she has sewn together two straight panels of woven lamé with tucks only at the side. Decorated with silver and gold *choji-tsunagi*, a traditional Japanese motif, she has created a dramatic gown for a modern woman.



Madeleine Vionnet (1876–1975), France (Paris), *Wedding Dress*, 1922, silk, © The Kyoto Costume Institute, AC7007 91-15-3A, Photo by Richard Haughton



Madeleine Vionnet (1876–1975), France (Paris), *Henriette Evening Dress*, Winter 1923, lamé, © The Kyoto Costume Institute, Gift of Mr. Martin Kamer, AC6819 90-25A, Photo by Kazumi Kurigami

JAPONISM IN CONTEMPORARY FASHION: SURFACE MOTIFS

Unlike many fashion fads that come and go, the *kimono* has remained a stalwart source of inspiration for designers around the world. Looking past its T-shaped form, twentieth and twenty-first century designers from around the globe draw inspiration from Japanese decorative motifs as well as traditional weaving and dyeing techniques. Others explore technologically-oriented, cutting-edge textiles for their contemporary styles creating something new and original.

Hanae Mori's *Dress* marries a Western silhouette with traditional Japanese decoration. Popular Japanese motifs including cherry and plum blossoms, star-shaped bell flowers, iris, bamboo and serpentine streams decorate the free-flowing silk gown.

In Rei Kawakubo's *Evening Dress*, we see a flock of white *tsuru* (cranes) fly across a black silk skirt. The image of birds in flight is a traditional Japanese motif as is the choice of the crane. It represents good fortune and longevity due to its supposed long life span of 1000 years in Japanese mythology. Here the birds have been hand painted, giving them a free-spirited abstract appearance.



Hanae Mori (b. 1926), Japan, *Dress*, 1972, silk, Cincinnati Art Museum, Gift of Tsuneko Sadao, 1986.986a



Rei Kawakubo (b. 1942), Japan, for Comme des Garçons Noir, *Evening Dress*, Autumn/Winter 1991, silk, © The Kyoto Costume Institute, AC7076 92-7-4AB, Photo by Takashi Hatakeyama

JAPONISM IN CONTEMPORARY FASHION: OBI

Second only to the *kimono*, the *obi* (waist sash) is perhaps the most recognizable component of traditional Japanese dress. Like *kimono*, they are often made from elaborately decorated fabrics. A woman's *obi* typically falls into two categories—a wide example (up to 12 inches) made of an opulent textile for special occasions and a narrower, simple design for everyday wear. There are numerous ways to tie an *obi* and different knots are suited to different occasions and different *kimono*.

Traditional Japanese motifs might be woven, embroidered, painted, printed or dyed onto the fabric. Look closely at the museum's *Obi* from the early nineteenth century and Yohji Yamamoto's *Dress* from 1995. Both the *obi* and the skirt of the dress are crafted of a richly woven brocade of deep red and gold and feature floral designs with elaborate borders. The dress, made from a stiff brocade skirt and three pieces of jersey that wrap around the body, mimics the straight shape of a *kimono* with an *obi* tied around the waist.



Yohji Yamamoto (b. 1943), Japan, *Dress*, Spring/Summer 1995, silk/rayon-blend, polyester/rayon/nylon-blend, © The Kyoto Costume Institute, AC9166 94-34, Photo by Takashi Hatakeyama



Obi (detail), Japan, 1800–1850, silk, metallic thread, Cincinnati Art Museum, Gift of the John Herron Art Institute, 1938.63

JAPONISM IN CONTEMPORARY FASHION: SHIBORI

Shibori is a broad term for various types of resist dyeing. Known to Westerners as tie-dyeing, *shibori* requires cloth to be tightly bound to prevent dye from reaching parts of the textile. Depending on the desired end result, a cloth could be wrapped, pinched, stitched, folded, clamped or a combination of methods to form a resist. Once a fabric is dyed, the resist is released and the final pattern appears.

While shibori-style textiles can be found throughout this exhibition, it is these two contemporary examples that push the method to a new level. Typically, *shibori* binding threads are removed after the dyeing process and the fabric is often pressed flat. Maurizio Galante's *Pullover*, however, explores what happens when you omit the flattening process. In doing so he has created a unique textured fabric.

Yusuke Takahashi's *Jacket, Trousers and Shoes* was dyed using the *itajime shibori* method in which fabric is folded and clamped between blocks of wood. After the dyeing process created the black outlines, the designer hand-painted the resulting blocks with red and blue to create an abstract window-pane effect. In both pieces, tradition meets experimentation with contemporary results.



Maurizio Galante (b. 1963), Italy, *Pullover Blouse*, Autumn/Winter 1994, silk, © The Kyoto Costume Institute, Gift of Mr. Maurizio Galante, AC9155 94-28AB, Photo by Kazumi Kurigami

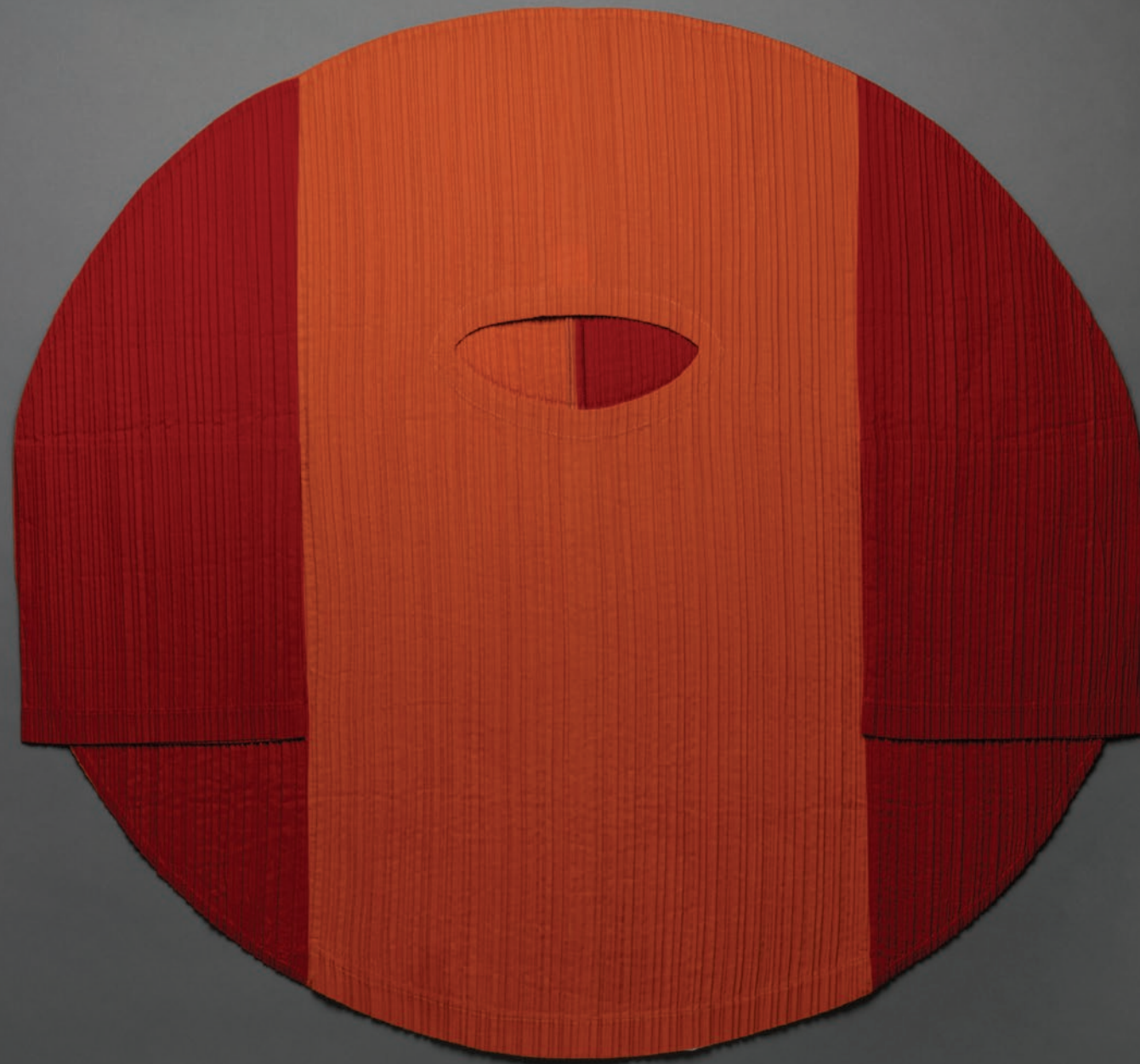


Yusuke Takahashi (b. 1985), Japan, for Issey Miyake Men, *Jacket, Trousers and Shoes*, Spring/Summer 2014, wool, polyester/polyurethane blend, suede, © The Kyoto Costume Institute, AC13266 15-32AD, Photo by Takashi Hatakeyama

JAPONISM IN CONTEMPORARY FASHION: TWO DIMENSIONS

The T-shaped form of the *kimono* is designed to lie perfectly flat when not on the body. This two-dimensional quality has influenced both Eastern and Western designers for more than a century. Like the *kimono*, Japanese designer Issey Miyake's aim is to create works from a single piece of cloth. In 1990, Miyake created the museum's *Rhythm Pleats Dress*, which is displayed here as a flat form. Notice in the image on the label how Miyake's permanently pleated dress takes on a different life when placed on the body.

In contrast to the simple lines of Miyake's style, Rei Kawakubo's *Jacket, Skirt and Socks* looks at two-dimensional fashion through a more whimsical lens. When discussing her 2012 fall collection in *10 Magazine* (Fall 2012), Kawakubo stated that, "Two dimensions are the future." This concept is realized here in an ensemble from the museum's collection that is paper-doll flat, using brightly colored floral-patterned felt instead of paper.



Issey Miyake (b. 1938), Japan, *Rhythm Pleats Dress*, 1990, polyester, linen, Cincinnati Art Museum, Museum Purchase with funds provided by Friends of Fashion, 2007.109



Rei Kawakubo (b. 1942), Japan, *Jacket, Skirt and Socks*, Fall 2012, polyester, cotton, Cincinnati Art Museum, Museum Purchase; Lawrence Archer Wachs Trust, The Cynthia J. Bogel Collection, 2016.247a-d

JAPONISM IN CONTEMPORARY FASHION: SILHOUETTE

Like the groundbreaking couturiers that came before them, contemporary designers like John Galliano and Kunihiko Morinaga look to the *kimono* for inspiration while working to re-envision dress for both women and men. At first glance, these two ensembles appear to only have the same color in common. Upon closer inspection, however, the silhouette of each garment, hints at the *kimono* form. In Galliano's micro-mini *Ensemble* from 1994, he has married the traditional Western double-breasted jacket with Japanese shapes, including a broad collar, wide drop sleeves, embroidered *obi*-like sash and long train.

In Morinaga's *Ensemble: Yukata, Shirt, Pants and Hat* from 2013, the *kimono* again plays a role. The designer has pulled inspiration from the *yukata*, a summer-weight cotton *kimono*. Wearable by both men and women, the *yukata* includes long swinging *furisode* sleeves and references a style of collar that exposes the nape of the neck, a sensuous part of the body often exposed by geisha wearing traditional dress.



John Galliano (b. 1960), England, *Ensemble with Train*, Autumn/Winter 1994, wool, acetate, silk, © The Kyoto Costume Institute, AC9119 94-12-5, AC9120 94-12-6, Photo by Takashi Hatakeyama



Kunihiko Morinaga (b. 1980), for Anrealage (est. 2003), Japan, *Ensemble: Yukata, Shirt, Pants and Hat*, 2013, cotton, © The Kyoto Costume Institute, AC13124 2014-17A1, Photo by Takashi Hatakeyama

JAPONISM IN CONTEMPORARY FASHION: BORO

In today's disposable economy, if a garment shows wear or we tire of it, we throw it out. If it is old, it is no longer of value and discarded. In contrast, Japanese *boro* (ragged or tattered) textiles exemplify the aesthetic of *wabi-sabi*, a concept that reveres the beauty of natural wear and use. Created out of necessity, *boro* garments were patched again and again often using indigo-dyed cotton fabrics. Completely unplanned in their creation, these garments appear beautiful to the contemporary viewer.

Two contemporary Japanese designers, Rei Kawakubo and Junya Watanabe, have both found inspiration in the ragged and patched appearance of *boro* textiles. In the early 1980s, Kawakubo created asymmetrically constructed garments using unbleached, wrinkled, torn and ragged cotton. Her *Blouse and Dress*, from her Spring/Summer 1983 collection, looks like it has seen repeated repairs, giving it a sense of charm much like a *boro* garment.

In Watanabe's *Jacket, Shirt and Trousers*, from his Spring/Summer 2015 collection, we see a direct connection to *boro* textiles. Here he has used fifteen different fabrics for his hand sewn designer suit. In both garments, historic necessity meets high fashion.



Rei Kawakubo (b. 1942), Japan, *Blouse and Dress*, Spring/Summer 1983, cotton, rayon, © The Kyoto Costume Institute, Gift of Comme des Garçons Co., Ltd., AC7801 93-24-9AB, Photo by Taishi Hirokawa



Junya Watanabe (b. 1961), Japan, *Jacket, Shirt and Trousers*, Spring/Summer 2015, cotton, wool, linen, rayon, polyester, © The Kyoto Costume Institute, AC13199 2015-4-1AE, Photo by Takashi Hatakeyama

JAPAN POP

Just as handscroll paintings and *ukiyo* prints inspired *kimono* design at the turn of the nineteenth century, the art of twenty-first century Japan inspires contemporary fashion. Walk down the crowded streets of Tokyo's Harajuku district and you will see the influence of *anime*—animated media—and *manga*—Japanese comics and graphic novels—adorning the clothing of young men and women. From high street to high style, Japanese fashion of the new century pops.

The *anime* cult film *Mobile Suit Gundam* (1979) meets the runway in this *Tunic, Jacket, Trousers and Sneakers*, from Jonathan William Anderson's Spring/Summer 2016 collection. Images from the *anime* classic are represented in a jacquard woven robot motif on the tunic and shoes.

Manga artist Yumiko Igarashi, known for *Candy Candy* (1975) and *Josephine the French Rose* (2011–2014), worked with designer Kazuaki Takashima on this *Top, Collar, Skirt and Mask* from his Autumn/Winter 2014 collection. Although made for a woman, this ensemble draws on concepts of traditional girlhood and the Japanese aesthetic of *kirakira* (sparkle).



Jonathan William Anderson (b. 1984), Ireland, for Loewe, *Tunic, Jacket, Trousers and Sneakers*, Spring/Summer 2016, wool/nylon-blend jersey, nylon, cow leather, © The Kyoto Costume Institute, AC13382 2016-6AE, Photo by Takashi Hatakeyama



Kazuaki Takashima (b. 1973), Imagery by Yumiko Igarashi (b. 1951), Japan, for Né-net, *Top, Collar, Skirt and Mask*, Autumn/Winter 2014, cotton/rayon-blend jersey, polyester/cotton blend, cotton/polyester blend, sequins, © The Kyoto Costume Institute, Gift of A-net Inc., AC13154 2014-30A-D, FG, Photo by Takashi Hatakeyama

Kimono: Refashioning Contemporary Style, organized in partnership with The Kyoto Costume Institute and the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, celebrates the *kimono* and its lasting impact on international fashion from the 1870s to today. Drawn from the collections of The Kyoto Costume Institute and the Cincinnati Art Museum, this exhibition incorporates paintings, works on paper, textiles and ceramics alongside Japanese *kimono* and fashion by world-renowned designers.

Kimono: Refashioning Contemporary Style explores what happens to fashion when East meets West.



Interested in learning more about the impact of the *kimono* on Western fashion? Visit the Cincinnati Art Museum Shop to pick up a copy of the exhibition catalogue, *Kimono Refashioned: Japan's Impact on International Fashion*.

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Front cover: Japan, *Kimono* (detail), mid 19th century, silk, metallic thread, Cincinnati Art Museum, Gift of Edward Senior, 1974.16

Back cover and flap: John Galliano (b. 1960), England, for Christian Dior, *Dress* (detail), Spring/Summer 2001, silk, cotton, tulle, vinyl, leather, metal, © The Kyoto Costume Institute, Photo by Takashi Hatakeyama