

PRESS RELEASE

Minneapolis Institute of Art Acquires Important Japanese Textiles from Collector Thomas Murray

Collection of 230 textiles and objects, including many from the Okinawa region and Ainu people of Japan



Dark blue-ground festival kimono decorated with sea creatures, first half 20th century.

Cloth: cotton; *tsutsugaki* (freehand resist)

The John R. Van Derlip Fund and the Mary Griggs Burke Endowment Fund established by the Mary Livingston Griggs and Mary Griggs Burke Foundation

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MINNEAPOLIS—March 7, 2019—The Minneapolis Institute of Art today announced the acquisition of an important collection of Japanese textiles in a partial gift/partial purchase from Thomas Murray, independent researcher and expert collector of Asian and Tribal art. The collection features traditional Japanese clothing and fabrics made for home, work, and festival celebrations between the late 18th and early 20th centuries. A kaleidoscope of materials and designs, the acquisition includes exceptionally rare, brightly colored *bingata* and *ikat* kimonos and wrapping cloths made of wild banana fiber from subtropical Okinawa, delicately patterned *Mingei* (folk art) costumes and textiles used by farmers and fishermen from Japan's largest and most populous islands of Honshu and Kyushu, and boldly patterned garments of elm-bark cloth, nettle fiber, and salmon skin created by the aboriginal Ainu people residing on Japan's northern island of Hokkaido and formerly found on the Sakhalin island of Siberia.

Mia will celebrate this acquisition with a special exhibition that will go on view in fall 2020. The exhibition will present approximately 120 highlights showcasing the resourcefulness of human beings in creating textiles from all kinds of materials in a pre-industrialized world free of mass production.

"Thomas Murray's collection is equally impressive in its quality and depth," said Andreas Marks, Mary Griggs Burke Curator of Japanese and Korean Art at the Minneapolis Institute of Art. "Built over nearly 40 years by a man with a fantastic eye for textiles, a collection of this importance and breadth could not be put together today. Mia is thrilled to be the recipient of these important textiles, which will catapult us amongst the foremost collections of Japanese textiles in the world."

Mia

The Murray Collection adds important new dimensions to Mia's Japanese art collection, which is particularly strong in the areas of paintings and prints, sculptures, ceramics, and works of bamboo. Until now, there were only a few textiles in the collection, including Noh robes used in theatrical productions, wedding kimono made of silk, and so-called *meisen* garments made in the 1910s and 1920s, which feature bold and graphic designs.

Among the many outstanding textiles in the Murray Collection is an exuberant festival robe decorated with sea creatures and water motifs, used to celebrate a successful fish catch. The robe's decorations were hand-drawn and painted with a rice paste resist dye technique, *tsutsugaki*, making this robe one of a kind.

Other important highlights of the collection include Ainu robes which have long been celebrated for their exacting, symmetrical designs revealing the skills and aesthetics of the women who created them. One of these robes is known as a *kaparamip*, meaning "thin cloth," because it was made of cotton that was traded from the Japanese mainland. A decorative effect was achieved by using contrasting shades of trade cloth such as indigo that was then overlaid with a white cutout pattern appliqué and accented with red thread in a variety of embroidery stitches.



Red, blue, and white *kaparamip* robe, first half 19th century. Cloth: cotton; cotton appliqué and embroidery
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About the Japanese Art Collection at Mia

Mia's collection of Japanese art features outstanding concentrations of Buddhist sculpture, paintings, lacquer, works of bamboo, woodblock prints, and ceramics, and is particularly rich in works from the Edo period (1603–1868). Also notable is its collection of *ukiyo-e* paintings and prints, popularly known as "pictures of the floating world." Representative examples from the permanent collection of close to 9,000 works are shown in sixteen galleries of Japanese art—the largest permanent display devoted to Japanese art within any Western encyclopedic museum. Two historic rooms, a formal audience hall (*shoin*), and a teahouse (*chashitsu*) serve to heighten awareness of the relationship between art and architecture.

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About The Minneapolis Institute Of Art

Home to more than 90,000 works of art representing 5,000 years of world history, the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia) inspires wonder, spurs creativity, and nourishes the imagination. With extraordinary exhibitions and one of the finest wide-ranging art collections in the country—Rembrandt to van Gogh, Monet to Matisse, Asian to African—Mia links the past to the present, enables global conversations, and offers an exceptional setting for inspiration.

General admission to Mia is always free. Some special exhibitions have a nominal admission fee.

Museum Hours

Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday	10am–5pm
Thursday, Friday	10am–9pm
Sunday	11am–5pm
Monday	Closed

For more information, call + 1 612 870 3000 or visit artsmia.org

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