

*Designing Traditions: Student Explorations in the Asian Textile Collection,*  
August 8, 2008-December 7, 2008

The Fabric of History

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*Designing Traditions*, a juried exhibition, highlights student textile designs produced during the Spring 2008 semester in response to Asian textiles and clothing from the Museum's renowned permanent collection. Curators in the Museum's Costume and Textiles Department together with faculty in the School's Textile Department selected as reference works a number of intricately crafted textiles ranging in style and technique from a rural Indian wedding veil painstakingly tie-dyed, embroidered, and encrusted with mirrors to a twined and plaited Korean scholar's horsehair hat.

Part of the impetus for this project derived from a desire to bring the vision and taste of early collectors involved with the development of the Museum into the present and their donations into the sight of RISD students. Some of the first gifts to the Museum now fall under the auspices of the Asian textiles collection. These objects were regarded from the outset as a design resource for RISD students and were made accessible by Mrs. Eliza Radeke (President of RISD, 1913–1918; President of the Board of Trustees, 1918–1931) in 1907 by the creation of a textile study room. Stimulated by gifts from the influential and astute Mrs. Radeke and by Lucy Truman Aldrich's significant 1935 gift and 1955 bequest (the latter two total over 700 objects) the Asian costume and textile collection has grown steadily throughout the 20th century and now provides a wealth of material for both exhibition and teaching purposes.

Innovative knitted, printed, and woven textiles and handmade and computer-generated designs produced by the newest generation of RISD designers offer brilliant testimony to the breadth of creativity sparked by even the smallest details of traditional craftsmanship and serve as inspired manifestations of a long tradition of fruitful exchanges between the Museum and the School.

# RISD MUSEUM

## A Shared Vision

Anais Missakian  
Professor and Head  
Textile Department, RISD

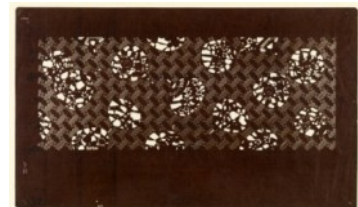
Participating Faculty  
Anais Missakian  
Maria Tulokas  
Liz Collins  
Gina Gregorio  
Brooks Hagan

As the new Chace Center opens and we foresee the potential of a building that shares both museum and academic spaces and programming, we reflect upon the opening of another RISD building almost a century ago. Adjacent to the Chace Center sits the Metcalf Memorial Building, constructed to house the Textile Department and its expanded facilities and dedicated in 1915 by the Metcalf family to honor Jesse Metcalf (1827–1899), a leader in the Rhode Island textile industry. Today, the Textile Department offers a broad-based education in many aspects of fabric, fiber, and pattern. The program emphasizes a thorough understanding and integration of the design process, structure, materials, and techniques. At the same time the curriculum encourages individual artistic expression, whether in design for industry or for fine-arts work.

Throughout their studies at RISD, students are asked to explore and go beyond their notions of what is acceptable or possible in a field rooted in tradition. When our colleagues from the RISD Museum's Department of Costume and Textiles invited us to showcase student work alongside Asian pieces from the collection that served as inspiration, the faculty enthusiastically embraced the idea and incorporated the project into our Spring 2008 curriculum. The collaboration between the Textile Department and the Museum has given our students a unique opportunity to scrutinize an important textile piece and to draw upon its rich history for inspiration. The selected designs on view here include works from sophomores, juniors, and first-year graduate students. These students have captured the spirit of the original sources through focusing on the historical significance, techniques, design elements, color, and material of their chosen pieces and in the process have found their own unique contemporary point of view.

## CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Japanese  
*Katagami (hand-cut paper stencil)*, 1800s  
Handmade mulberry paper (koko), persimmon tannin  
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 05.109



# RISD MUSEUM

Indian; Pakistani; Sindhi people  
*Woman's tunic*, late 1800s-early 1900s  
Cotton; silk; plain weave, embroidered, mirrorwork  
Bequest of Isaac C. Bates 13.2314



Japanese  
*Stencil*, 1800s  
Handmade mulberry paper (koko), persimmon tannin  
Bequest of Isaac C. Bates 13.463



Japanese  
*Katagami (pattern paper), stencil*, 1800s  
Handmade mulberry paper (koko), persimmon tannin  
Bequest of Isaac C. Bates 13.472



Indonesian  
*Man's top*, 1900-1950s  
Cotton; plain weave, machine embroidered, resist-dyed  
Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund and Gift of Paula and Leonard  
Granoff 2003.40.8



# RISD MUSEUM

Persian  
*Socks*, ca. 1830  
Wool; knit  
Gift of Martin Birnbaum 30.081



Japanese  
*Child's outer and under kimono*, late 1700s-early 1800s  
Silk, gold-wrapped yarn, gold foil; plain weave, resist-dyed (yu-zen),  
painted, embroidered  
Gift of Miss Lucy T. Aldrich 35.513A



Korean  
*Scholar's Cap*, late 1800s  
Horsehair, bamboo; interlaced, knotted  
Gift of George R. Pratt 52.535.5



Korean  
*Man's shoes (mituri)*, 1900-1950s  
Hemp; interlaced, knotted  
Gift of George R. Pratt 52.535.8



# RISD MUSEUM

Indian; Gujarati

*Woman's head covering (odhani)*, 1800s

Silk; satin weave, tie-dyed (bandhani), embroidered, mirror work

Bequest of Miss Lucy T. Aldrich 55.272



Indonesian; Minangkabau

*Woman's ceremonial cloth (kain songket balapak)*, 1800s

Silk, gold-wrapped yarn; plain weave, continuous supplementary gold weft patterning

Bequest of Miss Lucy T. Aldrich 55.546



Korean

*Man's shoes (taesahye)*, late 1800s

Silk, leather, rubber?; damask weave, appliquéd

Gift of Nelson A., Laurance S. and David Rockefeller 56.082

