

Textile Arts Council

The Bay Area Forum for artists, aficionados & collectors of weaving, rugs & tapestries, baskets, costume & wearable art

Sept. 2022
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Keeping Busy: Updates from the Textiles Curatorial Team at the Fiscal Year End

By **Jill D'Alessandro**, Curator in Charge, Costume and Textile Arts, and **Laura L. Camerlengo**, Associate Curator, Costume and Textile Arts

It has been an eventful spring and summer for the staff of the Caroline and H. McCoy Jones Department of Textile Arts. In April, Jill opened *Guo Pei: Couture Fantasy* at the Legion of Honor. This exhibition celebrates the extraordinary designs of Guo Pei—hailed as China’s first couturier—with more than 80 works from her most important collections shown on Beijing and Paris runways. A lavishly illustrated catalogue, edited and with contributions by Jill, accompanies the exhibition, and offers the first scholarly look at Guo Pei’s work, with contributions from international scholars and an interview with Guo Pei herself. The exhibition has received strong press attention and critical acclaim since its opening. Iris Kwok of *KQED* wrote, “Guo’s work shines here, both literally and figuratively, considering the sheer amount of gold and silver thread,” while Gail Goldberg of *7x7*, proclaimed “The show dazzles from top to bottom, gravity-defying headpieces to fanciful footwear and everything exquisite in between.” To date, the Museums have welcomed over 150,000 visitors to the exhibition. We are delighted to share that the show’s run now extends through November 27, 2022.

Several spring and summer programs have complemented *Guo Pei: Couture Fantasy*, ranging from dance performances and film screenings at the Legion of Honor to virtual lectures from leading scholars, the latter of which remain available on the Museums’ YouTube channel. The Textile Arts department was grateful to have the programmatic support of the Textile Arts Council, who sponsored a lecture by Rachel Silberstein, lecturer in the Department of Art and Art History at the University of Puget Sound, on April 23rd. In her talk, Silberstein explored the formation and meanings of “Chinese dress” collections in twentieth-century United States museums.

In April, *Patrick Kelly: Runway of Love* closed at the de Young. Presented at the Museums by Laura, this exhibition celebrates the career and legacy of Black fashion designer Patrick Kelly (1954–1990) through

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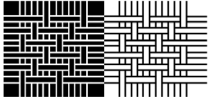


Patrick Kelly (American, active France, 1954–1990), Woman’s coat, Fall/Winter 1986–1987

Quilted printed cotton 96.5 cm (38 in.) center back length; 63.5 cm (25 in.) chest; 68.6 cm (27 in.) sleeve lengths

Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Gift of Audrey Smaltz, 2021.8.2

Photograph by Randy Dodson



**Keeping Busy: Updates from the Textiles
Curatorial Team at the Fiscal Year End**
(cont'd)



House of Chanel (French, est. 1910)
Karl Lagerfeld (German, active France,
1933–2019), Woman's gown, Resort 2012

Silk, silk net, and rhinestones
center back: 47 in., (119.4 cm.)

Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Gift of
Christine Suppes in honor of Jill D'Alessandro,
2018.28.1.121

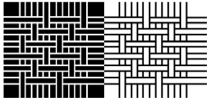
Photograph by Randy Dodson

seventy-nine fully accessorized ensembles dating from 1984 to 1990. As Lauren Moya Ford of *Hyperallergic* asserts, “The colorful exhibition is . . . a crucial tribute to this one-of-a-kind designer who brought messages of love and Black empowerment to the world stage through fashion.” The exhibition’s de Young presentation concluded with a closing day conversation between interdisciplinary artist Rashaad Newsome and Natasha Becker, Curator of African Art for the Museums. Rashaad and Natasha’s conversation explored the influence, impact, and legacies of ballroom culture in Harlem and New York City and artists like Patrick Kelly who drew inspiration from it. This program, along with others featuring Kelly’s former colleagues and friends, are available for viewing on the Museums’ YouTube channel. *Patrick Kelly: Runway of Love* is now on view at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts, where it will remain through November 6, 2022.

The Fine Arts Museums are honored to further preserve Patrick Kelly’s legacy by publishing the first-ever volume on the designer, of which Laura served as editor, and by the recent acquisition of nearly two dozen designs by Kelly for the Museums’ permanent collection. Donated by the late designer’s friends and colleagues – Elizabeth “Ms. Liz” Goodrum, Audrey Smaltz, and Cathy King – the garments and accessories span Kelly’s brief career. By their generosity, the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco now has one of the most significant collections of Kelly’s work in the United States.

As the summer has progressed, we have immersed in preparations for our next special exhibition, tentatively titled *San Francisco Style*. As many TAC members know, the Museums are home to one of the most significant collections of 20th- and 21st-century women’s costume in the United States. Through exemplary gifts of high fashion and haute couture from local style arbiters, the collection has grown to have remarkable strengths in women’s designs spanning these centuries, with outstanding works by Cristóbal Balenciaga, Gabrielle Chanel, Callot Soeurs, Christian Dior, Madame Grés, Christian Lacroix, Alexander McQueen, and Yves Saint Laurent. Slated to open at the de Young museum in fall 2023, *San Francisco Style* explores the fiber of our city through an examination of the sartorial choices of San Francisco’s best dressed, as represented in the Museums’ permanent collection.

(continues on page 3)



Keeping Busy: Updates from the Textiles Curatorial Team at the Fiscal Year End (cont'd)

The exhibition will feature 100 collection highlights and select local loans that speak to the unique outreach and ambition of San Francisco, beginning in the wake of the 1906 earthquake and continuing to the present day. A catalogue will accompany the exhibition and become the handbook for these holdings. We are presently conducting research to enrich the exhibition and catalogue narratives; outreaching to scholars of gender studies, fashion studies, and local history for catalogue contributions; contacting local donors for possible loans; and working closely with the Museums' Textiles Conservation Lab and the Photo Services department to photograph artworks for the catalogue. Stay tuned for more updates on this project as it progresses!

In addition to our work on exhibitions, we are delighted to co-host Zainab Ayoade (Ayoade) Balogun as our collections cataloguing fellow. A recent graduate of Stanford University with a Bachelor of Arts in African and African American Studies and a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Systems Engineering, Ayoade is supporting the Costume and Textile Arts and the Arts of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas Curatorial departments in our work by updating and standardizing object records in the Museums' new collections database. Additionally, she is conducting in-depth research on the department's Yoruba *egungun* ceremonial dance costume, which joined the Museums' holdings in 1998.

This past summer, Corazon (Cora) Downey joined us as our Jack Handford Summer Intern. Cora is a rising senior at University of California, Berkeley, pursuing a bachelor's degree in Art Practices. Her position is funded by a grant from the Costume Society of America, Western Region. For the past several weeks, Cora has diligently researched and re-catalogued designs for *San Francisco Style* in the Museums' collections database. We are thrilled to share that she will be continuing with the department this fall to assist with exhibition research.

In recent weeks, we have worked closely with our colleagues in the Photo Services department to photograph several new acquisitions to the Costume and Textiles collection. Among the works photographed were a selection of Indonesian *ikat* women's skirts and sarongs,

(continues on page 4)



Sarong, ca. 1985, Indonesia
Cotton; warp-faced plain weave, warp-resist dyeing (*ikat*)
61 x 21 1/4 in., (154.94 x 53.975 cm.)

Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Gift of Lafcadio Cortesi, 2021.94.2

Photograph by Randy Dodson

and a shoulder cloth, dating to the third quarter of the twentieth-century. The late Lafcadio Cortesi (1961–2022) generously gave these artworks to the Museums; he was leader in the international sustainability movement who worked in Indonesia for over 30 years and collected textiles from living weavers. Additionally, multidisciplinary artist Terri Friedman’s artwork, *ENOUGH* (2021), joined the Museums’ collection this spring. Friedman’s weavings are bold and bright, cathartic visual experiences that simultaneously entice and overwhelm the viewer. Comprising incongruent combinations of modest materials, such as acrylic yarns, hemp, chenille, and cotton piping in “sickly sweet” neon colors, her weavings have a homemade feel that imparts a nostalgia for the 1960s and 1970s, the era of her childhood, when an overriding sense of hope survived amid social unrest. *ENOUGH* appears on the Textile Arts Council’s Fall 2022 program card, and Friedman will speak about her artistic practice in a TAC-sponsored lecture on November 19, 2022.



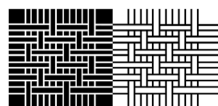
Terri Friedman (American, b. 1962), *ENOUGH*, 2021
Cotton, wool, acrylic, chenille, hemp and metallic fibers
90 x 75 in. (228.6 x 190.5 cm.)

Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Museum purchase,
Costume and Textile Arts Trust Fund

Copyright Terri Friedman

Photograph by Randy Dodson

Late this summer, we resumed international travel to further the department’s work. In August, Jill travelled to the International Council of Museums conference in Prague, Czech Republic, and the Contextile biennial in Guimarães, Portugal. Laura finished a textiles structure study course offered by Centre International d’Étude des Textiles (CIETA) at the Musée des Tissus, Lyon, France. We look forward to seeing many of you back in the Bay Area this fall!



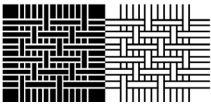
News from the Conservation Lab

By **Beth Szuhay**, Head of Textile Conservation

The spring and summer have been filled with transitions and additions for the Textile Conservation Lab. Beth Szuhay joined the Museums as Head of Textile Conservation following Sarah Gates’s retirement at the end of January. Anne Getts received a promotion to Conservator, and Laura Garcia Vedrenne, the Andrew W. Mellon Fellow, has been promoted to Assistant Conservator. The Fine Arts Museums extended Abra Berman’s contract following the installation of *Guo Pei: Couture Fantasy*, to assist Erin Algeo, Costume Mounting Specialist. Those of us in the Lab feel fortunate to have a full crew to care for the permanent collection and support the ambitious exhibition program.

The Lab is hosting an intern for the summer, Lauren Van Dessel, from the Kelvin Centre for Conservation and Cultural Heritage Research at the University of Glasgow. Her main project is to conserve and prepare a dress designed by French designer Maggy Rouff for catalog photography. The dress, “Sucre d’Orge,” was previously exhibited in the Museums’ exhibition *New Look to Now*. The dress has some interesting conservation challenges, including structural tears in the sheer organdy, knots and tangles in the delicate silk fringe, and discoloration in the edges of the flounces. Laura has been lending her expertise in stain reduction and the use of cleaning gels to guide Lauren’s cleaning tests.

(continues on page 5)



News from the Conservation Lab

(cont'd)

Since Guo Pei opened in April, the lab has assisted in the cross-departmental installation of *Faith Ringgold: American People*. To install this beautiful exhibition, Beth worked with Janna Keegan, Assistant Curator for Contemporary Art, and a courier from the New Museum, the exhibition's organizing institution. The exhibition includes the artist's early paintings and shows her transition to incorporating textile arts such as thangkas and quilts.

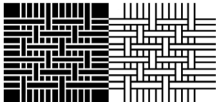
The main conservation focus for the lab has been to prepare 20th- and 21st-century women's costume in support of the upcoming exhibition with the working title *San Francisco Style*. The exhibition includes a comprehensive catalog that will serve as a handbook for the collection. Laura will contribute an essay to the catalog regarding her research and conservation of two Callot Soeurs ensembles. Erin and Abra have been systematically working through the exhibition list to dress the ensembles for catalog photography.

Dressing mannequins for photography and exhibition is a form of preventive conservation. Costumes cannot support themselves; they require a supportive mannequin or dress form. Erin and Abra first consult Beth, Anne or Laura to determine areas of the costume that are fragile and need additional care. They work closely with Jill D'Alessandro and Laura Camerlengo to choose a mannequin and style the dress both historically and to the curator's interpretation. This often begins with a "test dressing" to see how the gown behaves on a form, to assess for additional conservation treatment, and to add padding to areas of the mannequin to get the dress to appear as it would on a human body.

(continues on page 6)



Lauren Van Dessel, Textile Conservation Intern, and Laura Garcia Vedrenne, Assistant Textile Conservator, discuss the use of agarose gels for stain reduction treatments.



News from the Conservation Lab

(cont'd)

Amid this hive of activity, the lab continues to foster professional growth. Beth, Laura, and Erin attended the Annual Meeting of the American Institute for Conservation, held in Los Angeles from May 13th to the 17th. Beth and Erin participated in a costume mounting workshop led by former Fine Art Museums' Costume Mounting Specialist, Jennifer Nieling. The workshop offered an opportunity to catch up with Jennifer and learn her approach to mounting costumes. Laura teamed up with Laura Mina, Textile Conservator for Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture, to provide a Textile Stain Reduction workshop during the Annual Meeting. This workshop continues to be a popular offering for the Textile Conservation community. Plans are in the works for the Fine Arts Museums to host this workshop for conservation colleagues in the spring of 2023.

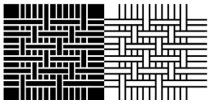
Laura recently attended a workshop, along with colleague Denise Migdail, Textile Conservator for the Asian Art Museum, on metal and composite threads hosted by the Cleveland Museum of Art. Both generously shared what they had learned with fellow conservators from the Fine Arts Museums in a presentation that included samples they had prepared of the various metal thread embroidery techniques and examples from the Museums' collection.



Erin Algeo and Abra Berman, Costume Mounting Specialists, assess an evening dress designed by Jacques Costet for catalog photography.



Laura Garcia Vedrenne, Assistant Textile Conservator, and Denise Migdail, Textile Conservator at the Asian Art Museum, present a summary of their experiences at the Metal and Composite Threads Workshop, held June 8th to 10th at the Cleveland Museum of Art, to FAMSF Conservation colleagues.



From Shirley Juster, Textile Arts Council Board Chair

September 2022

We are gradually moving back to in-person events. Beginning with our April lecture, our events went hybrid as our guest speakers appeared in person with a simultaneous broadcast on Zoom. This policy will continue, providing access to our lectures for those who cannot attend and to be inclusive of our global audience. We would love to see you and hope you will join us at the Koret Auditorium to reconnect with other TAC members.



Installation view of *Faith Ringgold: American People*, de Young, San Francisco, 2022

Artwork © Faith Ringgold / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Photograph by Randy Dodson, courtesy of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco

Add these dates to your calendar!

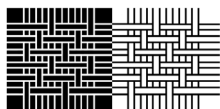
October 15

Culture through Cloth: Hmong Textiles & Fashion with Pachia Lucy Vang, Hmong Textile Artist & Curator

November 19

Bittersweet: Painting the Loom with Terri Friedman, Artist and Associate Professor at California Academy of Arts

(continues on page 8)



TAC's Holiday Party

Save the Date!

December 7

St. Mary's Cathedral Event Center
1111 Gough Street, San Francisco
6:30-9PM

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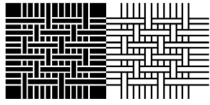
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From the Board Chair (cont'd)



Installation view of Guo Pei:
Couture Fantasy, Legion of Honor,
San Francisco, 2022

Photograph by Jorge Bachmann,
courtesy of the Fine Arts Museums
of San Francisco

Because it has generated such excitement and acclaim, the extremely popular *Guo Pei: Couture Fantasy* has been extended through November 27. Don't miss this unforeseen opportunity to explore the work of Guo Pei for the first time (or even the second, third, or fourth time)! You will gain a new appreciation with each.

This exhibit, an exclusive engagement at the Legion of Honor, highlights the extraordinary work of China's first couturier and the first Chinese designer invited to be a member of France's *Chambre Syndicale de la Haute Couture*. Curated and documented by Jill d'Alessandro, Curator in Charge of Costume and Textile Arts for the Fine Arts Museums, Guo Pei's work is displayed throughout the permanent collection and within special exhibition galleries.

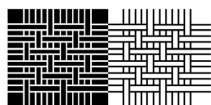
This short video (<https://legionofhonor.famsf.org/guo-pei>) will give you a look into Guo Pei's life and design inspiration as well as Jill's insights in the planning and staging of this remarkable exhibition. Don't miss this exclusive opportunity to see Guo Pei for the first time (or even the second, third, or fourth time)! You will gain a new appreciation with each visit.

As part of our *Talk & Tea* program in conjunction with major exhibits, TAC hosted an early morning tea at the Legion of Honor Cafe followed by a talk by Lucy Barter of the San Francisco School of Needlework and Design on *Guo Pei's Runway: Inspiration and Dreams in Chinese Embroidery*. A very special part of this event was Jill's private behind-the-scenes tour of *Guo Pei: Couture Fantasy* for members of the Dressers Circle prior to the museum's opening.

In keeping with our ongoing support for the Costume and Textile Department, TAC donated \$10,000 in support of this major exhibition.

Despite masking and social distancing, we continue to organize community events. In May, TAC hosted a textile and garden tour of Filoli, the Peninsula estate famed for its historic house and gardens. Our house and garden tour, especially curated for TAC, focused on Filoli's rarely seen textiles collection.

(continues on page 9)



From the Board Chair

(cont'd)

Art historian, scholar, and TAC board member Joan Hart invited us to her home in June to view a selection of her private collection of antique and paisley shawls. Joan discussed the weaving techniques employed in paisley production beginning in Kashmir and spreading to France, Scotland, and England as the shawls gained in popularity and value.

Continuing this survey of the work of local artists, we will visit the studio of Joe Cunningham, a San Francisco quilt artist, on November 9. Joe is the author of many essays and articles on quilt making, of which his book *Men and the Art of Quilting* is one of the most acknowledged.

In 2021, TAC launched its Virtual Program Series dedicated to highlighting the lives and work of living Bay Area fiber artists through a video documentary and artists' conversations. Our website has now added a new section, **Bay Area Fiber Artists Series**. The first program focuses on Alice Beasley, an Oakland-based African American figurative quilter. This video by the filmmaker Mark Haffenreffer captures Alice at work and highlights her process and inspirations. The film tells the story of how she came to quilting and fabric portraiture, as it examines themes in her work such as her family history. The second program, to be released later this year, will focus on fiber artist and weaver **Kay Sekimachi**. Please support this innovative project by making a special donation in your membership renewal.

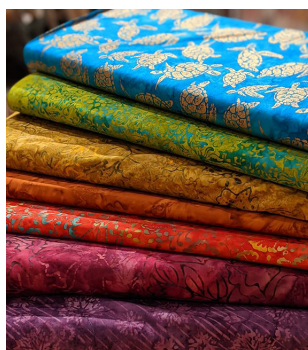
Our annual **Textile Bazaar** is a truly unique event, hosting a vendor mix (images below) that offers a wide range of textiles, jewelry, and home accessories from around the world and from the creative community within the Bay Area. Please join us on November 12, 2022 at St. Mary's Cathedral Event Center.



Nora Daniels



Dianne Boate



Britex Fabrics



Jenny Fong

We are thrilled to welcome four new board members who begin their term mid-September: Susan Bloch, Patricia Bruvry, Kathleen Fung Zurich, and Graciela Rondo.

A special thank you to Sophie Aldrich, Ellin Klor, Jeanie Low, and Ulla de Larios for standing for another term.

We are also so fortunate that our exiting board members who termed out this year, have all agreed to continue to support TAC as advisory board members: Leslee Budge, Cathy Cerny, Alex Friedman, and Shelley Wells. With deep gratitude, thank you.

Lastly, please watch your mail for details of TAC's Holiday Party.

Shirley Juster

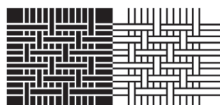
Textile Arts Council Chair



Our **TEXTILE BAZAAR** has returned!

We are thrilled to once again be in business at St. Mary's Cathedral event center. Last November, it was a huge success. I have so many of you to thank for your participation...the vendors who hung in there waiting for local decisions on COVID restrictions; all of you who donated to the TAC sales table, making this a profitable event; and the volunteers who managed the crowds and kept us masked. And it was wonderful that so many of you came, shopped, and supported our annual sale.

Based on the popularity of this event, we've booked the space for this year at **St. Mary's for Saturday, November 12, 2022.**



Textile Arts Council

deYoung \ fine arts museums of san francisco

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