

Experience L.A.

Ceremonies and Celebrations

Textile Treasures from the USC Pacific Asia Museum Collection

Friday, September 28, 2018
USC Pacific Asia Museum, Pasadena

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

- *Ceremonies and Celebrations* presents materials from the USC Pacific Asia Museum's collection of over 2,700 costumes and textiles from China, Korea, Japan, India, the Himalayas, and Southeast Asia.
- The textiles on display reflect the diversity of techniques, colors, materials, and patterns used for different purposes in different places and at different times.
- The exhibition is divided into four sections, looking at how textiles relate to gender, social status, religion, and special ceremonies or life transitions.
- Exhibition highlights include the imperial dragon robes worn by China's emperors and imperial family during the Qing dynasty (1644–1911); *whal-ot* (wedding robes) from Korea; Japanese kimono and *kesa* (Buddhist priest robes); Indonesian *ikat* textiles; and pineapple-fiber, or *Piña*, cloth from the Philippines.
- Some of the textiles in the show are rarely exhibited because of their fragile nature and the negative effect of light on the natural dyes used.

THE USC PACIFIC ASIA MUSEUM

Established in 1971, the USC Pacific Asia Museum is one of few U.S. institutions dedicated to the arts and culture of Asia and the Pacific islands. The museum has hosted several groundbreaking exhibitions, including the first North American exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art after the revolution and the first exhibition of Aboriginal art in the United States.

The museum holds around 17,000 objects in its permanent collection, spanning more than 4,000 years and the region from Persia to the Pacific Islands. Highlights include rare Japanese paintings and drawings from the Edo (1603–1868) and Meiji (1868–1912) periods; one of the largest collections outside of Japan of *Otsu-e* folk paintings; a large collection of East Asian ceramics dating back to the Neolithic era; graphic art from woodblock prints to posters by Ikko Tanaka; a jade collection including Chinese works from the Neolithic era to



the Qing dynasty; and outstanding examples of Buddhist and Hindu sculptures, paintings, and ritual objects. The USC Pacific Asia Museum is the only California museum where visitors can view examples of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Vietnamese Buddhist sculpture.

THE MUSEUM'S HOME AND HISTORY

The museum's home was built in 1924 for collector and entrepreneur Grace Nicholson (1877-1948) as her residence, galleries, and emporium. Nicholson hired the Pasadena architectural firm Marston, Van Pelt & Maybury to translate her pictures and ideas into a home in the Imperial Palace Courtyard style used in the construction of major buildings in Beijing (Peking). Nicholson rigorously researched the style and had materials imported from China.

In 1943, Nicholson gave the building to the City of Pasadena to use for art and cultural purposes, with the stipulation that she would retain the private rooms until her death. She shared the building with the Pasadena Art Institute until she passed away in 1948. In 1954, the Pasadena Art Institute changed its name to the Pasadena Art Museum, and in 1970, the museum moved to a new location and became the Norton Simon Museum. The next tenant of Grace Nicholson's former home was the Pacificulture Foundation, an organization founded by a white philanthropist named Margaret Palmer, who advocated for peace through cross-cultural understanding; when the foundation bought the building in 1987, what was once known as "The Grace Nicholson Treasure House of Oriental Art" became the Pacific Asia Museum. In 2013, USC partnered with the museum to form the USC Pacific Asia Museum.

The Grace Nicholson Building has been designated a Cultural Heritage Landmark by the cities of Pasadena and Los Angeles, is on the National Register of Historic Places, and was declared a Historical Landmark by the State of California. It is presently being considered for National Historic Landmark status.

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

- Why do you think the exhibition was organized by theme rather than by geography, time period, or culture? What did you glean from viewing the materials in this way?
- What meaning do you ascribe to the clothing you wear? Do you perceive your own clothing choices as cultural?
- Reflect on the idea of a museum. It is a place where art and objects deemed to have lasting value are collected, cared for, and made available to scholars and the general public. It is also a place where objects may be housed after they have been taken from their places or cultures of origin through a colonial process. These are just a couple of the many ways to define or understand what a museum is. What do you think are the roles, responsibilities, problems, and possibilities of museums?

IF YOU LIKED THIS EVENT, YOU MIGHT WANT TO CHECK OUT:

- The USC Pacific Asia Museum's searchable online collection pamcollections.usc.edu/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=hier
- The Fowler Museum at UCLA www.fowler.ucla.edu
- The collections of art from Asia and the Pacific Islands at LACMA collections.lacma.org
- The Craft and Folk Art Museum www.cafam.org



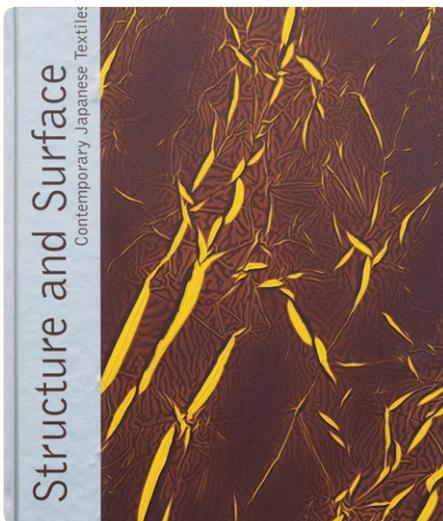
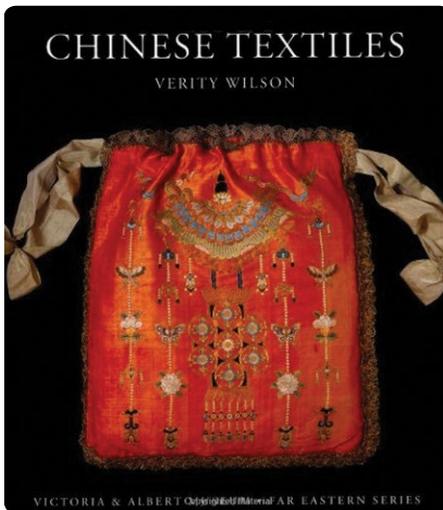
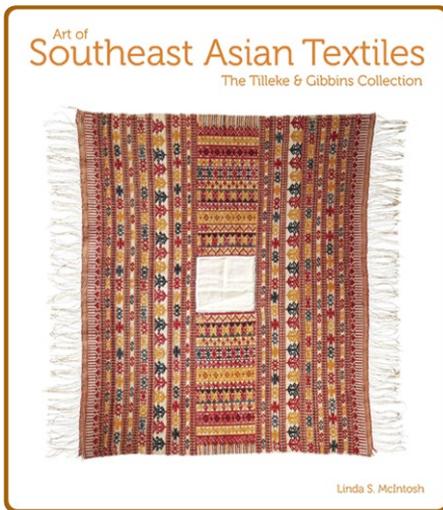
Norton Simon Museum, Pasadena



USC Pacific Asia Museum, Pasadena



Man's Formal Court Robe China, c. 1800 Silk satin; silk and metallic thread; metal buttons USC Pacific Asia Museum Collection Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Hake



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STACY WILLIAMS of the USC Libraries selected the following resources to help you learn more about the exhibit. Those with a call number (e.g., books) are physical items which you can find in our campus libraries. Those without a call number (e.g. journal articles and databases) are electronic resources, which you can access through the search bar on the USC Libraries homepage at libraries.usc.edu.

BOOKS

- ☉ McCarty, Cara., and McQuaid, Matilda. *Structure and surface: contemporary Japanese textiles* New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1998.
ARCHITECTURE AND FINE ARTS LIBRARY: NK8884.A1 S77 1998
- ☉ McIntosh, Linda S. (Linda Susan). *Art of Southeast Asian textiles: the Tilleke & Gibbins collection* Bangkok: Tilleke & Gibbins International, 2012.
ARCHITECTURE AND FINE ARTS LIBRARY: NK8877 .M42 2012
- ☉ *Sacred threads: Ceremonial textiles of Southeast Asia*. Singapore: Textile Friends of Singapore, n.d.
ARCHITECTURE AND FINE ARTS LIBRARY: NK8897 .S237 2001
- ☉ *Su sil ro chinnŭn ch'önsang: Tong Asia üiryë poksik = Threads of heaven: textiles in East Asian rituals and ceremony*. Seoul: Sungmyöng Yöja Taehakkyo Chöng Yöng-yang Chasu Pangmulgwan, 2006.
DOHENY MEMORIAL LIBRARY: NK9282 .S827 2006 OVERSIZE
- ☉ Wilson, Verity. *Chinese textiles* London: V & A Publications, 2005.
ARCHITECTURE AND FINE ARTS LIBRARY: NK8883.A1 W55 2005

JOURNAL ARTICLES

- ☉ Emma Dick. "Performing Eurasia in the textiles and clothing businesses along the Silk Road." *Cambridge Journal of Eurasian Studies* 2, no. 1 (n.d.).
<https://doaj.org/article/8f81e0fcaa9346fe812275fb6d78dc5c>.
- ☉ Rhee, Eun-Young. "Clothing and Textiles Education in South Korea: Perspectives for the Knowledge-Based Information Society." *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal* 26, no. 2 (n.d.): 191–200.
- ☉ Anonymous. "Timbuktu to Tibet: Rugs and Textiles of the Hajji Babas." *Antiques & Collecting Magazine* 113, no. 8 (n.d.): 11.
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/197181143>

DATABASES

Arts & Humanities

This database features hundreds of titles covering Art, Architecture, Design, History, Philosophy, Music, Literature, Theatre, and Cultural Studies.

Art Full Text (H.W. Wilson)

Art Full Text is a comprehensive resource for art information featuring full-text articles from more than 300 periodicals dating back to 1995, high-quality indexing and abstracting of over 600 periodicals dating as far back as 1984, including 280 peer-reviewed journals, as well as indexing and abstracting of over 13,000 art dissertations.

ARTstor

Provides access to over a million high quality images of art and photography, with descriptions and provenance. Also includes images in the fields of anthropology and architecture.