

KIMONO
THE LANDSCAPES OF ITCHIKU KUBOTA
AS ART

Presented at

Timken Museum of Art/San Diego Museum of Art
San Diego, CA: Nov 1, 2008 - Jan 4, 2009

Canton Museum of Art
Canton, OH: Feb 8 - April 26, 2009

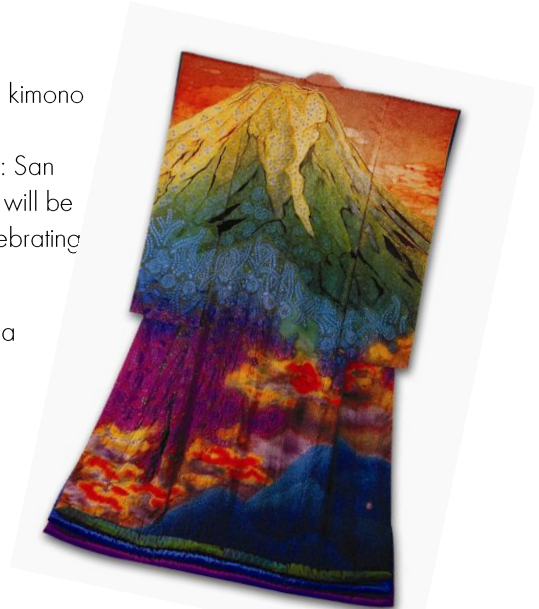
SUMMARY: In the fall of 2008 and winter of 2009, an exhibition of 40 giant landscape kimono of Japanese Master Itchiku Kubota is coming to the United States for only the second time.

Kimono as Art: The Landscapes of Itchiku Kubota will tour to two American cities: San Diego, California, and Canton, Ohio, at a cost of over \$1,000,000. Featured in the exhibit will be the panoramic tapestry *Symphony of Light* made up of 30 kimono, plus 12 other kimono celebrating Kubota's reverence for nature.

In 1995, the Smithsonian's Natural History Museum broke its rule on never hosting works of a living artist to present the kimono of Itchiku Kubota. The show's catalogue became the best selling Smithsonian catalogue of all time.

BACKGROUND: Kimono is more than an exhibit of the works of an internationally acclaimed artist and creative genius. It is the dramatic story of one man's life-long passion, overcoming war and poverty, in search of the secret behind the lost textile process called Tsujigahana (Tsu-jee-ga-ha-na).

Born in 1917, Itchiku Kubota began learning the art of dyeing at the age of 14. When he was 20, he encountered an old silk kimono in the Tokyo National Museum. He was fascinated by its extraordinary beauty, design complexity and saturated colors. Frozen in place, Kubota studied it for three hours. "In a sudden moment," he said, "I encountered a source of boundless creativity which revealed to me my calling." The remnant before him was a rare example of the lost art of Tsujigahana, which made use of a simple, subtle dye technique that had been lost over the centuries. Kubota promised himself that he would rediscover its secret. Then World War II broke out, and he found himself fighting in North Korea. He was taken prisoner by the Russians and put in a Siberian prisoner-of-war camp. Upon his release in 1951, he devoted his life to finding the lost dyeing process.



Itchiku Kubota 1917 - 2003

It was not, however, until 1977, when he was 60 years old, that he finally developed his own dyeing and decorating techniques that involve complex tie-dyeing and ink drawing, often on textiles woven with gold or silver threads. His labor-intensive secret methods, sparked by that 350-year old textile, produce a rich layering of texture, ink drawing and color subtly suggestive of French Impressionism, an artistic style he particularly loved. Kubota was finally ready to show the world his discoveries. His first exhibit in Tokyo was a huge success. Since then, Kubota has won international acclaim for his creativity and dedication to this extraordinarily laborious craft that requires a full year for each kimono to come into being. Kubota's dream was to live to the age of 120. That's how long he figured it would take to complete a series of 75 kimono that would hang side by side to form a monumental tapestry of the four seasons and the cosmos called *Symphony of Light*. Before his death on April 26, 2003, he completed the first 30 pieces, "Autumn" and "Winter." April 26 is also the last day of the exhibit in Canton. Today, his family, a team of apprentices, and his son, Satoshi

Kubota, carry on the tradition. In an enormous gesture of generosity the Kubota family has agreed to let **Kimono** come to the United States for a second time.

HOST, SPONSOR & COORDINATOR: The Canton Museum of Art presents, in cooperation with ArtsinStark–The County Art Council, **Kimono as Art: The Landscapes of Itchiku Kubota**. The Timken Foundation of Canton is the sponsor. ArtsinStark, the County Arts Council, will coordinate a 12-week celebration and assist with public relations.