

MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS ST. PETE

The Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, Announces Upcoming Exhibition: *Kimono: The Triumph of Japanese Dress*

Over 150 garments and artworks celebrate the artistry, craftsmanship, and cultural significance of one of Japan's most iconic forms of dress.

March 8, 2025 through June 8, 2025



ST. PETERSBURG, FL (January 28, 2025) — [The Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg](#) (MFA), proudly presents *Kimono: The Triumph of Japanese Dress*, an extraordinary exploration of Japanese fashion and culture. On view from March 8 through June 8, 2025, this remarkable exhibition features over 150 exquisite objects, including kimono dating from the late Edo period (1603–1867) through the Shōwa era (1926–1989). These garments, most on public display for the first time, offer an unparalleled glimpse into Japan's rich cultural heritage and the meticulous artistry behind traditional kimono design.

The exhibition, curated by Dr. Stanton Thomas, Chief Curator, and Jason Wyatt, Director of Collections Management, highlights the diversity and cultural significance of the kimono, inviting visitors to explore these garments as art, fashion, and historical artifacts. The kimono featured in the exhibition are on loan from two prominent private collectors based in Florida. Complementing the kimono on display are related accessories such as obi, the traditional and highly prized sashes, as well as Japanese photography, woodblock prints, and decorative arts from the MFA Collection, offering a comprehensive view of the cultural and artistic traditions surrounding the kimono.



The kimono, the quintessential Japanese garment traditionally worn by men, women, and children, was not merely everyday attire but also communicated identity, status, personal taste, and cultural values. The word “kimono” is derived from the Japanese kanji characters 着 (ki), meaning “wear,” and 物 (mono), meaning “thing,” which together translates to “a thing to wear.” This broad definition suggests the variety of garments kimono includes—extending far beyond the common Western perception of bright, elaborate, colorful costumes worn by young women or professional performers.

“This exhibition offers a rare opportunity to experience the beauty, complexity, and cultural significance of the kimono,” said Dr. Stanton Thomas. “From ceremonial robes to everyday attire, these garments tell rich stories about Japanese history, social movements, and artistic traditions. The kimono are masterpieces of construction, ornamentation, and symbolism that transcend time and geography. They are typically full-length garments sewn in a t-shaped profile, carefully composed of and sewn from specific cuts from a single bolt of cloth. Depending on the type of kimono, various elements—such as design, color, ornamentation, fabric, technique, and details —play a significant role in defining their purpose and meaning. For instance, the vibrant designs inspired by nature, mythology, and the changing

seasons often found on *furisode*—the classic flowing and sleeved kimono worn by young women — suggest erudite intellectual references, and the simpler patterns on home-spun garments suggest ancient traditions and trades. With designs ranging from vibrant to subtle and materials ranging from the finest silk to humble banana fiber, kimono defy our expectations and consistently surprise us with their extraordinary range of artistic expression.”



Kimono: The Triumph of Japanese Dress is organized around several interwoven themes, exploring the kimono’s evolving role in Japanese culture and society. Visitors will encounter a diverse array of garments, from brilliantly colored *furisode* with their elegant long sleeves to somber *juban* with their secret inner hand-painted or brocade scenes. The exhibition also showcases the artistry and techniques behind these exceptional garments, beginning with the weaving of the *tanmono*—the long, narrow bolt of cloth from which kimono are constructed—and continuing through the creation of the intricate decorative designs that make each piece unique. Many kimono feature a combination of refined techniques, including finely woven damasks and brocades, free-hand painting achieved through a resist process, and embroidery using gold-wrapped or lacquered threads. The striking shibori technique, a sophisticated Japanese method of tie-dyeing, further enhances the visual beauty of these garments.

“This exhibition underscores the MFA’s commitment to presenting diverse and thought-provoking works that celebrate global art and culture,” said Klaudio Rodriguez, Executive Director of the Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg. “*Kimono: The Triumph of Japanese Dress* is visually captivating and educational

journey that deepens our appreciation of Japan's enduring artistic legacy. Through dynamic programs and events, visitors will have the opportunity to engage with the exhibition in hands-on and immersive ways, bringing the artistry and culture of kimono to life."



The MFA will host a vibrant lineup of programs and events to complement the exhibition, including art-making workshops, hands-on activities, docent tours, lectures and talks, musical performances, and culinary experiences inspired by Japanese culture.

Kimono: The Triumph of Japanese Dress promises to be an unforgettable experience, offering visitors an unparalleled opportunity to appreciate the timeless elegance and cultural richness of these extraordinary garments.

Related Programs:

March

- **Saturday, March 15 – Shibori Workshop Series**
 - Adults (18+): 10:00 a.m.
 - High School: 1:00 p.m.
 - Middle School: 2:30 p.m.
- **Sunday, March 16 at 1:00 p.m. – Marly Music Series: Shiho Yamashita of 13 Strings Melody**
- **Wednesday, March 19 at 10:00 a.m. – Museum Minis with Tombolo Books featuring “Suki’s Kimono” by Chieri Uegaki**

- **Sunday, March 23 at 2:00 p.m.** – *Conversation with a Collector: Peter Kuhlmann*
- **Sunday, March 30 at 2:00 p.m.** – *Gilded Age Geishas: 19th-Century America's Obsession with Japan with Annamarie Sandecki*

April

- **Thursday, April 17 from 6:00–8:00 p.m.** – *MFA After Hours (21+) with In Between Days*
- **Sunday, April 27 at 2:00 p.m.** – *Author Talk with Yuniya Kawamura*

May

- **Saturday, May 10**
 - *Ikebana Floral Workshop* – 10:00 a.m.
 - *How to Wear a Kimono with Satomi Hirano* – 2:00 p.m.
- **Wednesday, May 14 at 10:00 a.m.** – *Homeschool Hours: Kimono*

June

- **Saturday, June 7 at 11:00 a.m.** – *Conversation with a Collector: Sue Castner*

For more information about the exhibition and associated programming, visit mfastpete.org/exhibition/kimono/.



Exhibition Details:***Kimono: The Triumph of Japanese Dress***

March 8, 2025 through June 8, 2025

The Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg

mfastpete.org/exhibition/kimono/

Press Kit & Exclusive Press Preview:

Kimono: The Triumph of Japanese Dress [Press Kit](#)

Press Preview | *Kimono: The Triumph of Japanese Dress*

Thursday, October 10, 2024, at 9:00 AM

[Press Preview RSVP](#)

Images (top to bottom, left to right)

1-3: *Uchikake with Manmaku*, c. 1900–1940, Silk, Collection of Norma Canelas and William Roth

4: *Woman's Furisode*, c. 1935, Silk, Collection of Peter Kuhlmann and Diane Gilmour

5: *Boy's Kimono with Propaganda Designs*, c.1935, Silk, Collection of Norma Canelas and William Roth

6: *Obi with Scene Featuring Western Style Houses and Boats*, 1920s – 1930s, Silk, Collection of Norma Canelas and William Roth

###

ABOUT THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, ST. PETERSBURG

[The Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg \(MFA\)](#) has an encyclopedic collection of art from around the globe and across the centuries, with almost 5,000 years of civilization represented in thousands of objects extending from antiquity to the present. The collection includes works by Georgia O'Keefe, Claude Monet, Berthe Morisot, Auguste Rodin, Kehinde Wiley, Jacob Lawrence, and many others, as well as ancient Greek and Roman, Asian, African, Art of the Americas, and Native American art. The museum's photographic collection is one of the largest and most well-respected in the Southeast. The museum's rotating exhibition galleries feature a diverse selection of temporary exhibitions from all over the world, as well as exhibitions curated from the museum's extensive collection. In addition to its robust exhibition program, the MFA engages the community through exciting public programs and events and serves students through youth programs and a partnership with the Pinellas County School System.

MEDIA CONTACT

marketing@mfastpete.org

727.896.2667

The Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg

255 Beach Drive NE, St. Petersburg, FL 33701

mfastpete.org