

PERSONAL GEOMETRY QUILTS BY
YOSHIKO JINZENJI & VIRGINIA JEAN COX MITCHELL



02/08—05/18/2014

YOSHIKO JINZENJI



A consummate textile artist, Yoshiko Jinzenji is at once a master quilter, innovative fabric designer, multilingual book author, and respected teacher. Initially intrigued by Amish and Mennonite quilts over four decades ago, she has since created dozens of textiles from her studios in Japan and Indonesia. These landscapes resonate deeply in her work. Inspired by locally available plant materials like indigo, tinggi and jambal tree bark, and sappanwood, Jinzenji single-handedly pioneered the use of bamboo dye to create soft shades of white and creams—an achievement renowned fabric designer Jun’ichi Arai lauded as “a tremendously difficult technical and creative feat.”

Jinzenji’s reliance on natural rather than commercial dyes lends her quilts their characteristically spare aesthetic and subtle palette. Indeed, the visual interest in Jinzenji’s quilts derives primarily from texture: she seeks to create “shadows and light, and to find a balance between minimalism and a sense of richness.” Through this quest, Jinzenji transforms cloth by quilting, piecing, weaving, and dyeing, which she considers complementary processes.

The Spencer Museum of Art serves as a significant repository of Jinzenji’s quilt works, all of which were generously donated by the artist. We are honored to join institutions such as the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Museum of Arts and Design, the International Quilt Study Center and Museum, and the New England Quilt Museum as collectors of Jinzenji quilts. This exhibition celebrates more than a decade of Jinzenji’s creativity and passion.



cover image:

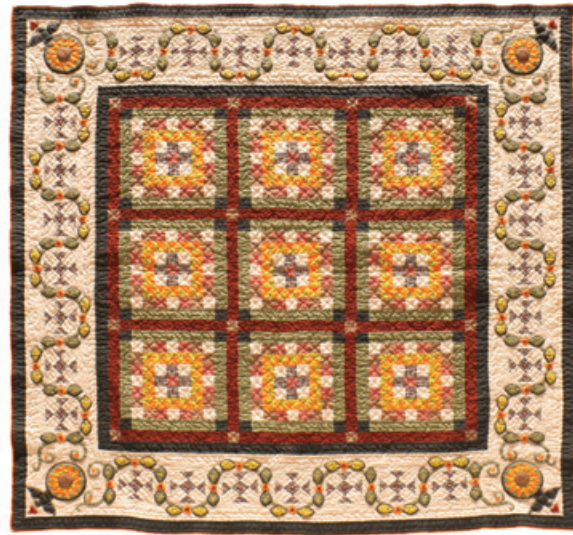
Yoshiko Jinzenji
Shimmering Waves (detail),
1998, from *Optical Quilt* series
Gift of the artist, 2007.0100

clockwise from upper left:

Jinzenji, *Mandala* (detail),
Gift of the artist, 2007.0102.046

Jinzenji, *Bamboo White Sample
Quilt*, 1998, Gift of the artist,
2007.0106

Jinzenji, *Color III* (detail), 1996,
from *Ribbon Tape Quilt* series,
Gift of the artist, 2007.0110



clockwise from top left:
 Mitchell, *Cotter's Field quilt*
 1977-2007, Gift of Virginia Jean
 Cox Mitchell and Bill, 2013.0164

Mitchell, *Alone in Our Garden
 quilt*, 2004, Gift of Virginia Jean
 Cox Mitchell and Bill, 2013.0175

Jinzenji, *Bamboo White Baby
 Quilt*, 1998, Gift of the artist,
 2007.0107

clockwise from top left:
 Mitchell, *Oz II quilt*, 1979-1980,
 Gift of Virginia Jean Cox
 Mitchell and Bill, 2013.0162

Jinzenji, *Coconut Field*, 1993,
 Gift of the artist, 2007.0099

Mitchell, *Rode to Phila. quilt top*,
 1987-1988, Gift of Virginia Jean
 Cox Mitchell and Bill, 2013.0185



ADULT PROGRAMS FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

Wednesday, February 19 / Friends of the Art
 Museum Reception 5:30-7:30PM
 Members-only reception

Saturday, February 22 / Artist Talk with Yoshiko
 Jinzenji: Asian Creation—Inspired Design from
 the East / 2:00PM Slide presentation

Sunday, March 2 / Up Close with Susan Earle:
 Personal Geometry / 2:00PM Curatorial tour
 and informal discussion with Susan Earle

Thursday, April 10 / Senior Session: Personal
 Geometry / 10:00AM Led by Curator Susan
 Earle, designed for senior citizens but open
 to everyone

Sunday, April 13 / Barbara Brackman gallery talk
 2:00PM Presented by the Spencer's honorary
 Curator of Quilts

Tuesday, April 15 / Artist Talk with Virginia Jean
 Cox Mitchell / 1:30PM The artist will give a talk
 in the *Personal Geometry* exhibition space

YOUTH & FAMILY PROGRAMS FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.

Saturday, March 15 / Saturday Art Adventure:
 Quilt Geometry / 10:30-11:30AM
 Director of Education Kristina Walker leads a tour
 of *Personal Geometry*. Participants then create
 paper quilt blocks (ages 5-8 and chaperones).

Saturdays & Sundays in April
 Art Cart: Quilting Time
 10AM-4:00PM Saturdays / 12-4:00PM Sundays
 The Art Cart is a drop-in activity station. In April,
 participants create quilt blocks in mixed media.

VIRGINIA JEAN COX MITCHELL



Described by one author as “a Kansas quilt wizard,” Virginia Jean Cox Mitchell has elevated the art of quilt-making to new heights. Based on in-depth historical and personal research, her quilts combine symbolic forms, design principles, text inscriptions, and even agricultural traditions.

Born in Kingman, Kansas, in 1931, Mitchell learned to sew at an early age. She graduated from the University of Kansas in 1953, a design major in Fine Arts. She made her first quilts in 1963, long before the resurgence in quilt popularity in the 1970s. She soon launched a series of blocks and pillows on Kansas themes, culminating in the pattern book that she and her husband Bill authored: *Quilt Kansas!*, produced in conjunction with the Kansas Quilt Symposium in 1978.

Her quilts celebrate special people and occasions. In technique, the works combine piecing and appliqué, embellished with chain stitch and other embroidery, all sewn entirely by hand using only cotton fabrics and thread. The subjects are as complex as Mitchell’s stitchwork. Each figure or flower has a story behind it. Every inch holds meaning.

Some of the motifs in her quilts are inspired by works of art in the Spencer Museum, likely encountered during Mitchell’s time spent cataloguing the Carrie Hall quilt block collection.

Mitchell has lectured widely and seen her work published in numerous journals and catalogues. She is also one of the founders of the Kaw Valley Quilters Guild, a group with more than 200 members today. Many of her quilts are completed tops, left un-quilted, as the artist always proves eager to move on to her next idea.



cover image:

Virginia Jean Cox Mitchell,
China Trade with Miss Liberty
U.S.A. quilt top (detail), 1986,
Gift of Virginia Jean Cox
Mitchell and Bill, 2013.0173

clockwise from top left:

Mitchell, *Kansas quilt block*
(detail), 1978, Gift of Virginia Jean
Cox Mitchell and Bill, 2013.0180.06

Mitchell, *Wheat Centennial quilt*
1974-1975, Gift of Virginia Jean
Cox Mitchell and Bill, 2013.0166

Mitchell, *Beginning Again quilt*
top, 1980-1985, Gift of Virginia
Jean Cox Mitchell and Bill,
2013.0169



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