



THE TEXTILE MUSEUM

Rachel Bucci  
Director of Marketing and Communications  
202-667-0441, ext. 42

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** June 7, 2005

**Contact:** Cyndi Spain, Public Information Assistant, 202-667-0441, ext. 17

## **Rozome Masters of Japan on View at The Textile Museum**

**October 14, 2005 – February 12, 2006**

**June 7, 2005, Washington, DC** —Rozome Masters of Japan, featuring the work of 15 contemporary Japanese artists, will be on view at The Textile Museum October 14, 2005 – February 12, 2006. The exhibition includes folding screens, scrolls, panels and kimono all created using *rozome*, a wax-resist dyeing technique unique to Japan. The exhibition is complemented by a selection of Japanese textiles from The Textile Museum's own collections.

*Rozome* has roots in ancient Japan, dating to the Nara period (645-794). It was eclipsed by other resist-dye techniques after the Heian period (794-1185) but experienced a revival of popularity in the early part of the 20th century, when Kyoto-based kimono specialists began to reexamine the possibilities of the wax-resist medium. *Rozome* flourished after World War II as artists became interested in the technique as a vehicle for unique image-making and self-expression on cloth. Today, in the hands of these talented artists, *rozome* is used to create technically breathtaking, complex works whose imagery ranges from traditional botanical and landscape subjects to contemporary abstract compositions. *The Japan Times* says that all of these artists use a culture-specific visual vocabulary derived from processes essential to the art of kimono to give *rozome* its signature Japanese look.

Unlike other wax-resist dyeing techniques, such as the batik method of applying wax

--more--



Yusuke Tange, *Angels Trumpet*, 2000,  
*rozome*, 62" x 35".

to cloth before repeatedly immersing the cloth in dye baths, *rozome* involves the use of a brush to apply the wax and dye directly onto the fabric. This provides greater control in the use of color and allows the artist to create areas of subtle shading and depth rarely seen in other wax-resist textile arts. Because of this method, the artists featured in Rozome Masters of Japan are considered the painters of the fiber world.

The Textile Museum objects in *Rozome Masters of Japan* were created using other traditional Japanese resist-dyeing techniques – *katazome*, *shibori* and *yuzen-zome* – that eclipsed *rozome* after the Nara period. Also included is a kimono made prior to World War II that illustrates the return to wax-resist dyeing after it was revived by Japanese artists at the turn of the 20th century. These textiles were produced in workshops that involved many artists working on each object. *Rozome*, in contrast, has been adapted and perfected by artists who prefer to create art outside of the workshop tradition, producing unique, expressive works that bring Japanese dyeing into the contemporary art world.

Rozome Masters of Japan is organized by Betsy Sterling Benjamin and Ann Wessmann in collaboration with Massachusetts College of Art. The exhibition is curated by Betsy Sterling Benjamin, a preeminent historian of Japanese textiles and author of The World of Rozome: Wax Resist Textiles of Japan, the definitive book in English on *rozome* art. The exhibition is supported in part by grants from The Japan Foundation and Friends of Fiber Art International. The Textile Museum's presentation of Rozome Masters of Japan is supported in part by The Rau Foundation.

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully-illustrated catalogue published by the Exhibitions Department at Massachusetts College of Art. The catalogue documents the significant development in modern Japanese *rozome* at the end of the 20th century and the early years of the 21st century, providing a valuable resource on modern textile art.

###

Founded in 1925 by George Hewitt Myers, The Textile Museum is an international center for the exhibition, study, collection and preservation of the textile arts. The Museum explores the role that textiles play in the daily and ceremonial life of individuals the world over. Special attention is given to textiles of the Near East, Asia, Africa and the indigenous cultures of the Americas. The Museum also presents exhibitions of historical and contemporary quilts, and fiber art. With a collection of more than 17,000 textiles and rugs and an unparalleled library, The Textile Museum is a unique and valuable resource for people locally, nationally and internationally.

The Textile Museum is located at 2320 'S' Street, NW in Washington, DC. The Museum is open Monday - Saturday 10:00 am to 5:00 pm and Sunday 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm. Admission is free; suggested donation is \$5.00. For further information, call 202-667-0441.

**For more information or images**, please contact Cyndi Spain at 202-667-0441, ext. 17, or by email at [cspain@textilemuseum.org](mailto:cspain@textilemuseum.org) or visit [www.textilemuseum.org/about/pressroom.htm](http://www.textilemuseum.org/about/pressroom.htm).