Kyoto Artisans and their Worlds

Instructors: Monica Bethe, Douglas Woodruff

One of the attractions of the ancient capital of Japan is the variety of fine and applied arts that continue to feed the city. Geographically these include the textile workshops of Nishijin in the northwest of the City, the ceramic workshops in the southeast around Gojozaka, and the web of artisans supporting the traditional artist guilds: papermakers, gold leaf craftsmen, carpenters, printers, and bamboo workers. Through visits to studios and museums, the course will seek to give the students first-hand experience of not only the crafts, but also their changing role in supporting the lifeblood of Kyoto as a city. This year fall semester we will focus on materials—bamboo, wood, clay, cloth, and paper—and the processes by which they turn into objects integral to daily life in Japan—splitting, smoothing, shaping, dyeing, and printing. We will look at blinds and archery bows, architectural and interior accents, tea bowls and flower vases, kimono and obi, screens, scrolls, sliding doors, Buddhist statues, and more. Classes are focused around weekly fieldtrips backed by lectures and readings providing historical, cultural, and technical background for each topic.

Due to the space restrictions of many of the workshops, enrollment will be limited to 11 KCJS students.

Eligibility: no previous knowledge is required, but commitment and consistent class attendance is imperative. This is a class where each student is expected find his or her own meaning from varied first-hand experiences, not a course where the teachers present a theory and require the students to apply it to specific examples.

Class Requirements: 100% class attendance with no absences allowed, without prior notice of sickness or other problem. Generally there is no way to make up a fieldtrip, and without the first-hand experience, there is no way to write a weekly report, which cumulatively count for 30% of the grade.

Students will be expected to choose a personal focus to explore in depth and to give a class presentation on it as well as to write it up as a final paper. The final project presentations and final paper of around 10 pages should support research, fieldwork and/or hands-on projects.

Assessment: will be based on class participation and quizzes (10%), weekly worksheets (30%), presentations (30%), and final paper (30%).

Accomodating students with disabilities. Every effort will be made to accommodate special needs. Before registering for the course, however, please note that almost every class involves fieldtrips and many of these require considerable walking and negotiating narrow, steep steps. Studens with
DS-certified accomodation letters should see the KCJS resident director to confirm their needs. If you believe you have a disability that requires accomodation, contact your home school’s Disability Services or Columbia’s Disability Services at disability@columbia.edu. The Office of Global Programs (OGP) can assist you in this.

**Schedule**

Sept 6: Introduction.

Sept 13: Bamboo— from fences, baskets, and screens to bow making. Visits to a bow maker, and hanging screen shop, and a bamboo workshop.

*Required reading:*

*Extra reading:*


*Required reading*
*Hunter, Dard. Papermaking: The History and Technique of an Ancient Past.*

*Extra reading*
Sept 23 (National Holiday): (SATURDAY OUTING) Clay, wood, and straw~ whole day outing to Shiga prefecture to investigate the pottery village of Shigaraki, visit a renovated country house (minka) and stop by the Miho museum. Opportunity for some to try throwing pots.

**Required Reading**


**Extra reading:**

*Richard Wilson, Inside Japanese Ceramics. (p. 15-34)*


Sept 27: No class.

Oct 4: City dwellings, machiya, their construction, maintenance and furnishings. Metalwork and visit to a kettle foundry.

**Required reading**


**Extra reading**


tools and materials passed out in class.


* Background culture: Tanizaki Jun’ichiro, *In Praise of Shadows.*


**Required reading**


**Extra reading**

*Maruyama Nobuhiko, *Yuzen.*


*Brandon. *Country Textiles of Japan: The Art of Tsutsugaki.* (p 3-20)

*Yoshioka, Sachio. *Ryūkyū Bingata.* (Kyoto Shoin, 1995). P. 1-95 (much is photographs)


**Required reading**


*Sandberg. *Indigo Textiles: Technique and History.* (p. 13-29), & (p. 71-76) & (p. 93-97)

**Extra reading**

*Wada. *Shibori: The Inventive Art of Japanese Shaped Resist Dyeing:* (p 7-52)

*Dusenbury, Mary, ed. *Color in Ancient and Medieval East Asia.*


Oct 25:  Nishijin area and weaving textiles from gold thread to multi-colored patterns.

Required reading


*Bethe, Monica. “Historical Survey of Gold on Fabric.” Unpublished

Extra reading


Nov. 1:  Fall Break.   No class.

Nov. 8:  Buddhist altar items: implement and statue making.

Required reading

*Nara National Museum. Viewing Buddhist Sculpture. PP 3-19

*Kayu Matsuhisa pdf articles.


Extra reading


Mitsumori Masashi, ed. Shikosha, 1993, pp. 10-16

Nov. 15: Craft in the wake of modernization: the *mingei* movement. Visit to the former home of potter and architect Kawai Kanjuro.

**Required reading**
*Leach, Bernard and Yanagi Soetsu. The Unknown Craftsman: A Japanese Insight into Beauty. (87-100, 109-112, 120-126)*
*Uchida Yoshihiko, We Do Not Work Alone: The Thoughts of Kanjiro Kawai. Kawai Kajiro’s House. 1973 (p. 1-12)*

**Extra reading**
*Richard Wilson, Inside Japanese Ceramics. (p. 15-34)*

Nov. 22: Tea Ceremony and craft.

**Required reading:**

**Extra reading:**
*Louise Cort and Andrew Watsky, ed. Chigusa and the Art of Tea. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, 2014. (pp, 19-72)*

Nov. 29: Student presentations
Dec. 6: Student presentations.

Final papers due to be handed in on the exam date.

**Reference books for further study.**

General

**Bamboo**

**Buddhist statues and implements (for sculpture, refer also to books on Art History in general and the Japan Arts Library)**

**Carpentry and architecture**
Cram, Ralf Adams. *Impressions of Japanese Architecture and the Allied


**Ceramics**


Honolulu Academy of Arts, *Yakimono: 40000 Years of Japanese Ceramics.* 2005


**Papermaking and printing**

Hunter, Dard. Papermaking: The History and Technique of an Ancient Craft.
Dover Pub, 2011
Needham, Joseph. Science and Civilization in China: Vol 5, Chemistry and
Chemical Technology, Part 1, Paper and Printing. Cambridge University

Textiles
Kyoto Shoin’s Art Library of Japanese Textiles –20 volumes
Benjamin, Betsey Sterling. The World of Rozome: Wax-Resist Textiles of
Bethe and Yamakawa. Transmitting Robes, Linking Minds: the World of
Buddhist Kasaya. Kyoto National Museum. 2010
Bethe, “Reflections on Beni: Red as a Key to Edo-Period Fashion” in When Art
Became Fashion. (p. 133-151)
Weatherhill, 1986.
Hareven Tamara. The Silk Weavers of Kyoto: Family and Work in a Changing
Kirihata Ken, “Yûzen Dyeing: A New Pictorialism” in When Art Became
Fashion.
Murashima, Kumiko. Katazome, Japanese Paste-Resist Dyeing for
Contemporary Use. Lark Books, 1993
Nakano Eisha with Barabara Stephan. Japanese Stencil Dyeing: Paste-Resist
Sandberg. Indigo Textiles: Technique and History.
Stinchecum, Amanda. Kosode: 16th to 19th Century Textiles from the Nomura
Takeda, Sharon, et al. When Art Became Fashion. Los Angeles County
Museum, 1992