

Textile Arts Council

The Bay Area Forum for artists, aficionados & collectors of weaving, rugs & tapestries, baskets, costume & wearable art

January 2010

Volume XXV, Number 1

Upcoming Programs and Announcements

Unless otherwise indicated*, all programs are held in the Koret Auditorium at the de Young Museum in Golden Gate Park, 50 Hagiwara Tea Drive, San Francisco. Admission to the programs is FREE to TAC members, \$10 for non-members, and \$5 for FAMSF members and students with I.D. No additional Museum admission fee is necessary. You may enter from the garage level or the main floor entrance between the main and side doors to the Museum. (*alternate location, when indicated, is the Legion of Honor Museum, 34th Ave & Clement St., San Francisco.)

Saturday, January 16, 2010, 10 a.m.

The Art Quilt, An Overview: 20 Years In The Development Of Quilts As Art Made For The Wall

With Yvonne Porcella

The definitive exhibit, "The Art Quilt," toured the United States for three years, showing overly-large-sized quilts made by 16 artists. Curated by Michael Kile and Penny McMorris, the catalog for the exhibit defined the concept of quilt as art.

Yvonne Porcella has been in the unique position of being able to travel and document the advancement of professionalism among the artists. She identified the individuals who were the teachers and innovators, and witnessed the onset of a marketplace for the art quilt. This lecture will show early exhibits of quilts in galleries, college public spaces, and ultimately, in prestigious museums. Some artists have remained strong within the movement, and the lecture will show both early and later works by a select group. She will also speak about Studio Art Quilt Associates, an international organization of artists that has grown within the last 20 years to a membership of over 2500.

Yvonne Porcella's work has toured in national and international shows of contemporary American quilt makers, and is actively collected by individuals and corporations. The Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution acquired her quilt, "Takoage," and selected it to join 300 objects from Smithsonian museums for the two year national tour celebrating the Smithsonian's

150th anniversary. Her work was shown in the 9th Invitational Triennial of Tapestry in Lodz, Poland. Major US museums own her quilts, as does the Chojun Textile Museum in Seoul, Korea. She has taught and lectured throughout the United States, Canada, Australia, Europe, and Japan. She is the Founder of Studio Art Quilt Associates; was honored as an inductee in the Quilters Hall of Fame, Marion, Indiana; and was the 5th recipient of the Silver Star Award at the International Quilt Festival, Houston, Texas. She has served on the Advisory Boards of the IQSC (International Quilt Study Center) and the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, and 15 years on the Board of The Alliance for American Quilts. She is currently a Board member of the San Jose Museum of Quilts & Textiles.

Saturday, February 13, 2010, 10 a.m.

Primitivism And Abstraction In Persian Tribal Flatweaves

With Alberto Levi

This presentation will focus on various groups of Persian flatwoven textiles, all of which are distinguished by stark color contrasts and bold graphics. These tribal flatweaves bear strong yet mysterious resemblances to western abstract contemporary art, and it has been documented that in some cases these served as inspiration for modern artists.

All of these textiles were originally intended as utilitarian objects and were often woven by the tribeswomen as an important part of their dowry. These had a variety of practical uses in daily nomadic life, primarily within the tent. *Jajims*, which are long flatweaves woven in the warp-face technique, were used to decorate the inner



Art quilt by Yvonne Porcella, toured with the SITES exhibit, "Women of Taste," a collaboration of quilt artists and women chefs. Porcella's chef partner was Julia Child, who suggested the theme.

Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco

de Young Legion of Honor

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From the Board's Chair: Letter from Beijing

Containing some of the great museums of China, Beijing, with its wide, sprawling streets and boulevards, is the capital of a country on the move. The economy in China is bursting at the seams of centralized planning, with private ventures everywhere. It is part of the success of this massive country, where nearly twenty per cent of the world's population live—it is an international economic wonder.

But the successes here aren't limited to the economy. In a society with a traditionally high emphasis on education, schools and universities are being expanded with a view toward the future. I visited the Central Academy of Fine Arts here in Beijing, a new campus built on the outskirts of town. Even just the museum, there alone, is awesome, having been moved from its old location in central Beijing where it had outgrown its campus. The exhibitions on display were inspired by the recent International Design Conference held here in Beijing. It is really, totally, world class, including painting, calligraphy and traditional character design (as in fonts), architecture, and so many art forms, including textile design and fashion.

Someone said—I think it was travel author, Pico Ayer—that he loved visiting Tokyo as it was the world's first 21st Century city. That may be true, but to be followed soon afterward by at least two cities in China, Shanghai and Beijing.

Of course, at one time the great artistic traditions in China had been textiles, from the formal robes of the court to the simple and simply beautiful textiles of the people, both of the Han Chinese and the 54 minority groups here. I wonder what happened to all the hundreds of millions of the former and ubiquitous Mao jackets and suits everyone wore here 28 years ago when I first set foot on Chinese soil?

While Chinese textiles find their massive footprint within the traditions of east Asian textiles, we at the Textile Arts Council know that there is so much to learn and appreciate about the textiles of all the Asian textile traditions, as well as textile traditions throughout the world. The Textile Arts Council will continue to be one of the great volunteer organizations in the country, with a focus on exposing us through its amazing lecture series and other programs to international textile experiences.

And it bears repeating that the main mission of TAC is its support of the textile department at the deYoung, formally named after two of its principal benefactors as The Caroline and H. McCoy Jones Department of Textile Arts. This department, so ably headed by Jill D'Alessandro, continues to be one of the leading departments of its kind in the country. The department, as well as TAC, deserve our full support. Thanks to each of you individually for your part.

Paul Ramsey
TAC Chair

Programs continued from page 1

perimeter of the tent. *Perdehs* were first woven as simple weft-faced textiles, then the panels were individually dip-dyed in a bath of a specific color and subsequently joined to each other, often in dazzling combinations. These textiles were then used as tent dividers, defining specific areas within the tent. *Sofrehs* were either used to present food to guests or to store bread. They are characterized by their small, squarish formats and almost pictorial brushstrokes of colored wool. *Tachehs* were used as grain bags by the Bakhtiari tribe of western Persia. When opened from their side fastenings they reveal tribal textiles that are among the most visually striking. In this bag we see a plethora of weaving techniques, some of which have no structural basis but are used as pure embellishments. The abstract motifs that result from these embellishments are related to the Zoroastrian origin of the tribe and serve as amulets, protecting the bag and its precious contents.

Levi will also examine a recently discovered group of flatweaves originating from the Mazandaran region, situated in northern Iran near the Caspian Sea. These are distinguished by uniquely primitive patterns and minimalist color combinations that reflect a staggering modernism. This group will be the subject of a forthcoming book, and the authors have



Mazandaran kilim
Central Persia
349 x 210 cm
(11'4" x 6'10")
Circa 1900
Private collection, Italy

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Programs continued from page 2

kindly agreed to allow me to share with you a large amount of previously unpublished images and data collected in the region.

Alberto Levi has been actively studying Persian tribal rugs and textiles for many years. He has published a number of papers on Kurdish weavings in textile art publications, including Ghereh and Hali, for which he serves as a regular contributing editor. Levi has presented papers at the International Conference on Oriental Carpets (I.C.O.C.) in San Francisco (1990) and Philadelphia (1996), and was the chairman of the organizing committee for I.C.O.C. Italy in 1999. He lives in Milan, where he has a gallery specializing in tribal textile art.

Saturday, March 20, 2010, 10 a.m.

Bast Fiber Textiles Of Japan: From Tafu To Jōfu

With Melissa Rinne

***Please note this event takes place at the Legion of Honor Museum**

In this presentation, Melissa Rinne will introduce some of the bast fiber textiles still made in weaving communities across Japan. Archaeological evidence suggests that fibers taken from grasses and tree bark predate the use of silk or cotton by centuries. Textiles made from bast fibers have a long history in Japan. They include hemp (*taima*), ramie (*choma*, *karamushi*), wisteria (*fujii*), paper mulberry (*kozo*, *kajinoki*), Japanese linden (*shina*), kudzu (*kuzu*), and nettle (*irakusa*). Today, many Japanese bast fiber traditions have disappeared; those that do continue to do so under often tenuous circumstances. Fortunately, in some cases, local or government interventions have served to sustain production.

Rinne will touch on the painstaking, labor-intensive production techniques. She will also discuss methods for training students, and other social and economic factors affecting the survival of bast fiber textiles.

Down through history bast fiber textiles have been used for tax payments from the provinces to the central government, for daily wear of commoners, and for luxurious summer garments of the elite. Accordingly, they encompass a variety of fabrics ranging from thick, utilitarian cloths, such as *tafu*, “thick cloth” of paper mulberry, to diaphanous *jōfu*, “fine cloth” made from ramie and used for hot-weather kimono.



Two weavers in the Nara Sarashi Preservation Society (Tsukigase, Nara prefecture, Japan) sley the reed for a bolt of Nara sarashi, a fine hemp textile made with hand-spliced warp and weft threads. Photo by Melissa Rinne

The lecture will be illustrated with images from Rinne’s fieldwork on Nara *sarashi* (bleached hemp) weaving in Tsukigase, Nara prefecture; *fujifu* (wisteria cloth) weaving in Kamiseya, Kyoto prefecture; Echigo *jōfu* (ramie) production in Shiozawa and Muikamachi, Niigata prefecture; and bast fiber textile production in other locales across Japan.

Melissa M. Rinne is Associate Curator of Japanese Art at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco. Educated at Brown University, Kyoto City University of Arts, and Kyoto University, she lived in Japan for fifteen-plus years, working for the Kyoto and Nara National Museums, Stanford University (Kyoto Center for Japanese Studies), and the Inamori Foundation. Since 2005, Rinne has curated or co-curated five special exhibitions of Japanese art at the Asian Art Museum. Her publications include Masters of Bamboo: Artistic Lineages in the Lloyd Cotsen Japanese Basket Collection (2007), Lords of the Samurai: Legacy of a Daimyo Family (assisting author, 2009), and various articles, such as “Preserving Echigo Jōfu and Nara Sarashi: Issues in Contemporary Bast Fiber Textile Production” in Roy Hamilton and Lynn Milgrim, eds., Material Choices: Refashioning Bast and Leaf Fibers in Asia and the Pacific (Los Angeles: Fowler Museum at UCLA, 2007). Fluent in spoken and written Japanese, she has also translated numerous exhibition catalogues and articles on Japanese art.

TAC BOARD

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Recent Acquisitions

This fall, in recognition of the many wonderful acquisitions that have come into the museums' collections since he has been appointed director, the Fine Arts Museums director, John E. Buchanan Jr., organized the exhibition *Exhibiting Excellence: Recent Acquisitions 2006-2009*. The introductory panel explained how museum acquisitions funds are quite limited, and the majority of new objects come through gifts or bequests from individuals and museum support groups.

Included in this exhibition were two works from the textile arts department: a 1939 evening gown from the leading French designer Jeanne Lanvin, a gift from the Collection of Marjorie Gunst Stern, and a rare lampas woven fragment dating to the Seljuk period, the Turkic dynasty that ruled an area spanning Iran and Anatolia from the 11th to 13th centuries, a gift of George and Marie Hecksher.



Plate 1. Textile fragment
Central Asia; Seljuk period, ca. 1170–1285
Silk, gold threads; compound weave
(lampas)
Gift of George and Marie Hecksher
2006.127.3

geometric patterns, creates an offbeat rhythm that is prevalent throughout African textile traditions. Interspersed within this field is the depiction of mystical and earthly animals—symbols of power—including the scorpion, snake crocodile, leopard, bird,

lizard, human hand, and Igbo dance figures. The cloths are worn as hip wrappers by the high-ranking male members of the Ekpe (Leopard) Society of the Igbo people, who reside in the Cross River Region of Nigeria. This wonderful textile was on view this summer in the small exhibition, *Power in African Dress*, in the TB Walker Family Foundation Textile Education Gallery.



Plate 2. Man's ceremonial wrapper (ukara)
Nigeria, Cross River Region, Igbo people, 20th century
Cotton, plain weave, stitch-resist dyeing
Museum purchase, Textile Arts Council Endowment Fund, 2009.12

Over the past several years Textile Arts Council board member, Gerry Masteller, has been selectively gifting exquisite Indonesian textiles to the department. Last winter, he donated five exemplary works, including two ceremonial textiles (*ulos ragi hotang*) from the Toba Batak people of Sumatra, Indonesia. The *ulos ragi hotang* is a mantle or shawl worn at wedding ceremonies and at ceremonies announcing the birth of a boy. During a wedding, the groom's father drapes the *ragi hotang* cloth over the shoulders of the bride and groom, wishing them happiness and a large family. Following tradition, both cloths are woven on back-strap looms in a warp-faced plain weave with a simple warp-ikat patterning of dashes or arrowheads set against their dark blue backgrounds. In each, the ends are decorated with intricate bands of twining culminating in plied fringes. We see in both cloths the subtle sophistication that characterizes Batak weaving.

Georgia Sales gifted the museum a rare Minangkabau ceremonial sash. The sash is worn by a Minangkabau community leader from the village of Solok, Sumatra, during festivals and rituals. His ceremonial attire includes dark trousers, a jacket, and a short sarong secured by this elaborate sash as a signifier of his social standing. The *ikak pinggang* is a highly esteemed ritual cloth, a treasured

heirloom. The method of wearing the *ikek pinganng* can be traced to the early Hindu-Buddist period of the 14th century in Sumatra as evidenced by sculpture of that period. Measuring twelve feet long and woven on a treadle loom, the sash illustrates a multiple of techniques including a weft-faced plain weave, slit-tapestry, and supplementary-weft patterning. The lush silk border fringe is dyed in a bound-resist technique. This is an excellent example of the tradition, and marks another wonderful addition to the Indonesian textile collections.

A special thank you to our Textile Arts Council members that have generously donated works to the FAMSF collections in the past several years: Peter Sinton, Patricia Adler, George and Marie Hecksher, Sandra Whitman, Paul Ramsey, Gerry Masteller, and Kay Sekimachi. And a special thank you too to the members who have made donations to the Textile Arts Council Endowment Fund: Pamela Axelson, Cathy Cerny, Eleanor Coppola, Nancy Fadis, Mary Turner Gilliland, Kathleen Graeven, Carol Anne Hyde, Susan Jamart, Spring Kraeger, Evelyn McMillan, Susan Miller, Patricia Moyes, Francesca Passalacqua, Rosalind Uran, Lida Urban, Marilyn Webster, Louise Yale, and Susan York.

Jill D'Alessandro
Acting Curator

We would also like to thank those TAC members who have donated this year to the work of the FAMSF Textile Conservation Lab: Mikki Bourne, Cathy Cerny, Eve Conner, Julia Geist, Anne Holly, Patricia Moyes, Julie Norman, Francesca Passalacqua, Tedi Siminowsky, Laurel Sprigg, Suzanne Stassevitch, Cheryl Swanson, Rosalind Uran, Sue Willows-Raznikov, and Louise Yale.

ETHNIC TEXTILES BAZAAR

On a late September Sunday, the Sewing Workshop in San Francisco resembled Aladdin's cave, piled high with the colors and textures of faraway places. All afternoon a steady stream of eager shoppers pored over the treasures brought in by Textile Arts Council members.

The day was such a resounding success that TAC is already planning an even bigger and better edition of this event for next year. Stay tuned! Many thanks to all who attended, to Karine Langan for the use of the Sewing Workshop, to Mary Connors and Ruth Anderson for organizing the day, and to our vendors, who donated a portion of their proceeds to the Textile Arts Council. If you wish to be notified in time to rent a table next year, call us at the TAC office.



Photo courtesy of Carole Nelson

TOWARDS A PAPERLESS TEXTILE ARTS COUNCIL

Over the years, the business of the TAC has moved steadily away from typewriters, envelope stuffing and carbon paper and into the electronic world of e-blasts and a website. The expense of a printed newsletter increases with every issue. Once again, we urge you to consider taking your newsletter via email. At some point in the not-too-distant future, we hope to discontinue our print version, as have other support groups within the Fine Arts Museums. Please take a moment to visit the website and look at an archived newsletter—in full color!

<http://www.textileartscouncil.org/newsletters/spring-09.pdf>

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

R. L. SHEP ETHNIC TEXTILE BOOK AWARD, TEXTILE SOCIETY OF AMERICA

Nominations for the best book on ethnographic textiles published in 2009 are now being accepted until March 2010. The award, endowed by R. L. Shep in 2000, encourages the study and understanding of textile traditions by recognizing and rewarding exceptional scholarship in the field. Please send the full bibliographic citation of each book nominated to Barbara Belle Sloan, Associate Director, Center for the Study of Regional Dress, Fowler Museum at UCLA, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1549; bsloan@arts.ucla.edu

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

February 17, 2010
Please send your copy
to the TAC office at
tac@famsf.org

Welcome to Our New Members

Through Oct. 16, 2009

Luana Acton
Katherine Bloodworth
Beulah Chang
Kay Elsbree
Beverley Epstein
Evelyn Galenski
Pattie Gerrie
Bean Gilsdorf
Geetika Gupta
Jennie Lee Henderson
Beth Jerde
Anne Kasanin
Sheryl Katz
Marvie Lee
Carmen Mahood
Antonio Martins
Ina Nouel
Sandra Sardjono
Victoria Saxe
Matthew Shively
Joan Siboni
Barbara Strick
Suzanne Tucker
Jacqueline Vallier
Marjorie Wolf
Priscilla Wong

GENERAL CALENDAR

Calendar continues on next page

ONGOING

Until Jan. 10 *Chromatic Constructions: Contemporary Fiber Art by Dora Hsiung*, Chinese Cultural Center, 750 Kearny St., 3rd fl., San Francisco, Info: 415 986-1822 www.c-c-c.org

Until Jan. 17 *Exhibiting Excellence: Recent Acquisitions 2006 – 2009*, Carleton Gallery, de Young Museum. New pieces from every curatorial department of the Fine Arts Museums.

Until Feb. 1 *Bobbin Lace: The Taming of Multitudes of Threads*, Lacis Museum of Lace & Textiles, 2982 Adeline St., Berkeley. Mondays through Saturdays, Noon – 6 pm. 510 843-7178

Until Feb. 7 *Still Crazy*, An exhibition celebrating the crazy quilt. San Jose Museum of Quilts & Textiles, www.sjquiltmuseum.org

Until April 3 *Lace in Translation*, works by contemporary designers, inspired by traditional lace imagery. The Gallery at the Design Center, Philadelphia University, www.laceintranslation.com

Until April 10 *American Beauty: Aesthetics and Innovation in Fashion*, the Museum at FIT, New York City, www.fitnyc.edu/336.asp

Until April 11 *Contemporary Japanese Fashion: The Mary Baskett Collection*, and: *Fabrics of Feathers and Steel: The Innovation of Nuno*, The Textile Museum, Washington, DC, www.textilemuseum.org

Until May 11 *Night & Day*, the Museum at FIT, New York City, www.fitnyc.edu/336.asp

Until May 23 *Material World: Textile Treasures from the Collection*, Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, NM, www.internationalfolkart.org

Until June 6 *Amish Abstractions: Quilts from the Collection of Faith and Stephen Brown*, de Young Museum, San Francisco

JANUARY

- Jan. 6 – 31** *Suzanne Husky: Forest*, January's Artist-in-Residence at the de Young Museum will build and install a forest of textile trees from recycled fabric in the Kimball Gallery. Public participation is encouraged! Artist on-site Wed. – Sun. 1-5 pm (until 8:45 pm on Fridays).
- Jan. 8 – March 6** *Form, Not Function: Quilt Art at the Carnegie*, Carnegie Center for Art & History, Albany, NY, www.carnegiecenter.org
- January 11** Deadline for entries: *2010 Discarded to Divine*. The fifth annual Fashion show and auction, benefitting the programs of St. Vincent de Paul, will be held April 29, at The Hall at St. Mary's Cathedral. Preview the entries at the de Young Museum, Friday, April 9. More info: 415 552-5561 or email srosen@svdp-sf.org
- Jan. 10 – May 30** *Nick Cave: Meet Me at the Center of The Universe*, Fowler Museum at UCLA. If you missed this exhibition in San Francisco, you have another chance in Los Angeles. www.fowler.ucla.edu
- Jan. 15 – Feb. 20** *A Common Thread 2010*, annual members' exhibition, Textile Center, Minneapolis, MN, www.textilecentermn.org
- Jan. 29 – March 14** *Quicktake: Rodarte*, featuring the conceptual and daring fashion designs of sisters Kate and Laura Mulleavy. Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, New York City, www.cooperhewitt.org/EXHIBITIONS/quicktakerodarte.asp
- Jan. 30 – March 14** *Intimate Apparel (Merkin Exhibition)*, artists' interpretations of the pubic wig, curated by Linda Gass, University Art Gallery, University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth, www.umassd.edu/cvpa/universityartgallery/current/overview.cfm

FEBRUARY

- Feb. 5 – May 2** *Rhythm and Hues: Cloth and Culture of Mali, West Africa*, Museum of Craft and Folk Art, San Francisco, www.mocfa.org
- Feb. 11** *Scientific Testing of Art and Textiles*, a mini-symposium with scientists and FAMSF curators and conservators. Koret Auditorium, de Young Museum. \$10 general, \$5 FAMSF members. Info: 415 750-2610
- Feb. 12 – 14** *24th Annual San Francisco Tribal and Textile Arts Show*, Festival Pavilion, Fort Mason. Gala Preview Opening, Feb. 11, benefits the Textile and AOA departments of FAMSF. For Gala tickets, call 415 750-7656. For show information: www.caskeylees.com
- Feb. 12 – Jan. 2, 2011** *The Art of Living: Textile Furnishings from the Permanent Collection*, The Textile Museum, Washington, DC, www.textilemuseum.org

MARCH

- March 1** Submission deadline for artists: *International TECHstyle Art Biennial (ITAB)* San Jose Museum of Quilts and Textiles. Exhibition opens August 17. www.sjqmusem.org
- March 9** *Ornamental Accomplishments: The Fruits of Susanna Rowson's Academy* with Jane Nylander. Lecture and mini-exhibit of needlework and other material presented by the American Decorative Arts Forum. Florence Gould Theater, Legion of Honor, 8 pm. Free to ADAF members, \$15 for non-members. 415 249-9234 www.adafca.org
- March 11** *Seeing Through Textiles: A New Look at Paintings at the Legion of Honor*, lecture by Kathleen Taylor of the Lotus Collection, San Francisco. Florence Gould Theater, Legion of Honor, 10am. \$4 general, \$3 for museum members. Info: 415 750-3638.
- Mar. 19 – 21** *Reinvention Conference*. Co-sponsored by the Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA) and the Surface Design Association. Symposium 3/19–20 at San Francisco State University. 3/21 studio tours and museum exhibits. 3/22–24 3-day workshops, filling fast. For more info: www.saqa.com/newsebulletins/Reinvention.aspx
- Mar. 20 – July 4** *Quilts*, 300 years of British quilt-making. Victoria & Albert Museum, London, <http://www.vam.ac.uk/exhibitions/index.html>
- APRIL** and beyond
- April 2 and April 9** Textile nights at the de Young! Enjoy Friday night at the de Young with music, artists' demonstrations and lectures:
- April 2** – Julie Silber, author and respected quilt authority. Quilting and spinning demonstrations by local guilds.
- April 9** – Lynda Grose, Asst. Professor of Fashion, CCA Preview night for entries, *Discarded to Divine*
- Apr. 9 – 11** *A World of Creativity, CNCH* Conference of Northern California Handweavers with speakers, demonstrations, marketplace, exhibits. Santa Clara Convention Center, www.cnch.org

January
2010

Textile Arts Council

Don't miss these exciting TAC events!

■ **The Art Quilt, An Overview:
20 Years In The Development Of Quilts As Art Made For The Wall
With Yvonne Porcella**

Saturday, January 16

Koret Auditorium
de Young Museum

■ **Primitivism And Abstraction In Persian Tribal Flatweaves
With Alberto Levi**

Saturday, February 13

Koret Auditorium
de Young Museum

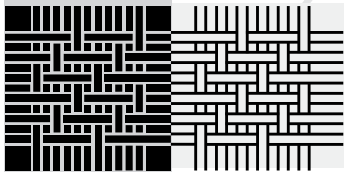
■ **Bast Fiber Textiles Of Japan: From *Tafu* To *Jōfu*
With Melissa Rinne**

Saturday, March 20

Legion of Honor Museum

Fine Arts
Museums of
San Francisco

de Young
Legion
of Honor



Textile Arts Council

de Young Museum

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January
2010

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