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Japanese Fashion Conquest in Paris Surveyed at Denver Art Museum in Fall 2016

Shock Wave: Japanese Fashion Design, 1980s-90s
spotlights design dialogue between East and West

DENVER – June 20, 2016 – This September, the Denver Art Museum (DAM) will present *Shock Wave: Japanese Fashion Design, 1980s-90s*, which will focus on how Japanese designers started a “fashion revolution” in Paris during the 1980s and 1990s. The exhibition will feature 70 looks by powerhouse Japanese fashion designers Issey Miyake, Kenzo Takada, Kansai Yamamoto, Yohji Yamamoto, Comme des Garçons and Junya Watanabe, whose impact on the field still resonates today. *Shock Wave*, which will include recent acquisitions from the DAM’s permanent collection, is the inaugural exhibition organized by Florence Müller, the DAM’s Avenir Foundation Curator of Textile Art and curator of fashion, who joined the museum in 2015.

“*Shock Wave* will introduce our visitors to the transformation of the museum’s textile and fashion collection, an initiative that is being spearheaded by Florence and focused on augmenting our holdings with contemporary works that expand the amazing design narratives we can present at our museum,” said Christoph Heinrich, Frederick and Jan Mayer Director of the DAM. “Florence has already begun this transformation by acquiring Japanese designer pieces that will be placed in new context in this upcoming exhibition, helping demonstrate the radical design processes that started defying convention in the ’80s.”

One of the most important recent acquisitions is a *Bump dress* from the renowned Japanese fashion label led by Rei Kawakubo—Comme des Garçons—as featured in the spring/summer 1997 collection titled “*Body Meets Dress—Dress Meets Body*.” Through looks like the *Bump dress*, Comme des Garçons completely reimagined the traditional relationship between the female silhouette and its connection to clothing.



Comme des Garçons, Jacket with Skirt, “Body Meets Dress, Dress Meets Body” collection, Spring/Summer 1997. Nylon/polyurethane stretch gingham with padding. Denver Art Museum, Neusteter Textile Collection.



Issey Miyake, Jacket with Transformable Bustle and Asymmetric Skirt, Autumn/Winter 1986 collection. Japanese ikat-printed cotton. Denver Art Museum, Neusteter Textile Collection.

Other notable acquisitions include an Issey Miyake 'ikat-printed' ensemble which was featured in the iconic 1988 book series by photographer Irving Penn and Issey Miyake, a coat from Comme des Garçons' famous fall/winter 1982–83 "Hiroshima Chic" collection and a significant piece from Maison Martin Margiela's conceptual spring/summer 1998 "flat cut" collection. The DAM also acquired several graphic pieces of Kansai Yamamoto from the early '80s, which are emblematic of his pre-streetwear chic signature style.

Shock Wave will also spotlight important loans from the fashion collections of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the de Young Museum in San Francisco, as well as from local and national private lenders.

"The impact Japanese designers had in the '80s and '90s was an important phenomenon in the history of fashion design," said Müller. "This exhibition will trace the origin of the innovations that they created through the reinvention of textiles, silhouettes and even fashion brand identity."

Japanese tradition, interpretations of Western culture, art and design and "deconstruction" concepts popular in Japanese fashion will be present in the looks on view. Emphasizing these elements, the exhibition will demonstrate how Japanese designers confronted and challenged the work of European designers during the 1980s including Jean Paul Gaultier, Anne-Marie Beretta, Azzedine Alaïa and Thierry Mugler, while they inspired younger European designers in the 1990s, such as Martin Margiela, Helmut Lang, John Galliano and Dries Van Noten.

The five thematic sections in *Shock Wave* will present the Japanese revolution that forever impacted fashion's creative design history:

How East Met West will explore how designers mixed Japanese forms and patterns with Western shapes and textiles, and the intersection between tradition and modernity. Featuring designs by Issey Miyake, Kenzo Takeda and Yohji Yamamoto, the section also will emphasize pop culture motifs through works by Kansai Yamamoto, who inspired and designed for David Bowie during his Ziggy Stardust and Aladdin Sane eras.

Japanese and Western Fashion Confronted will showcase the contrast between Japanese and Western drapery techniques and evaluate the difference between molding the body versus hiding the body with oversized shapes. Looks by Comme des Garçons, Yohji Yamamoto and Issey Miyake will be juxtaposed with looks by Anne-Marie Beretta, Azzedine Alaïa, Thierry Mugler and Jean Paul Gaultier.

Deconstruction/Reconstruction will focus on the creation of avant-garde shapes and textiles based on "deconstructing" and reinventing the traditional Western representation of femininity. Looks by Comme des Garçons, Junya Watanabe and Yohji Yamamoto will be represented in this section will exemplify how they overthrew standards in their approach to fabric, cut and style.

Art & Fashion in Dialogue highlights the convergence of art and fashion through contemporary art, including photographs and rare publications as well as dance and film collaborations. Works on view will include famous artist collaborations, initiated by designers Issey Miyake, Yohji Yamamoto and Comme des Garçons, which pioneered a new form of media.

How West Met East concludes the exhibition by reversing the first section, highlighting how the next wave of Western designers in the '90s were directly inspired by the trends set by Japanese designers. The finale will include the designs of Martin Margiela, Dries Van Noten, Helmut Lang and John Galliano, drawing attention to how they continued the wave of the innovative Japanese aesthetic including conceptualism, minimalism and diverse ways of challenging the fashion system.

The exhibition also will incorporate historical content such as exclusive fashion show photography and video footage, as well as designer catalogs to illustrate the initial shock felt in the fashion world. The presentation will include objects from the DAM's architecture, design and graphics collection, showcasing Japanese furniture designers from the same era whose work also reflects the East meets West aesthetic.

Shock Wave: Japanese Fashion Design, 1980s-90s will be on view in the Textile Art gallery on level 6 of the North Building from Sept. 11, 2016–May 28, 2017.

Exhibition Catalog

To accompany the exhibition, the museum will publish a 64-page catalog written by Florence Müller and Jane Burke, curatorial assistant of fashion and textile art at the DAM. The catalog will be available in The Shop and through the online museum shop, featuring many looks from the exhibition as well as the work of fashion photographers.

Exhibition Organizers and Sponsors

Shock Wave: Japanese Fashion Design, 1980s-90s is organized by the DAM. It is presented with generous support from the donors to the Annual Fund Leadership Campaign and the citizens who support the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD). Promotional support is provided by *5280 Magazine*, CBS4, Comcast Spotlight and *The Denver Post*.

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The Denver Art Museum

The Denver Art Museum is an educational, nonprofit resource that sparks creative thinking and expression through transformative experiences with art. Its holdings reflect the city and region—and provide invaluable ways for the community to learn about cultures from around the world. Metro citizens support the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD), a unique funding source serving hundreds of metro Denver arts, culture and scientific organizations. For museum information, call 720-865-5000 or visit www.denverartmuseum.org.



Kansai Yamamoto, *Jacket*, about 1980. Cotton jersey printed with a graphic including the brand name Kansai. Denver Art Museum, Neusteter Textile Collection.

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