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Manipulating the Threads of Culture: Contemporary *Shibori* Artist Yvonne Wakabayashi

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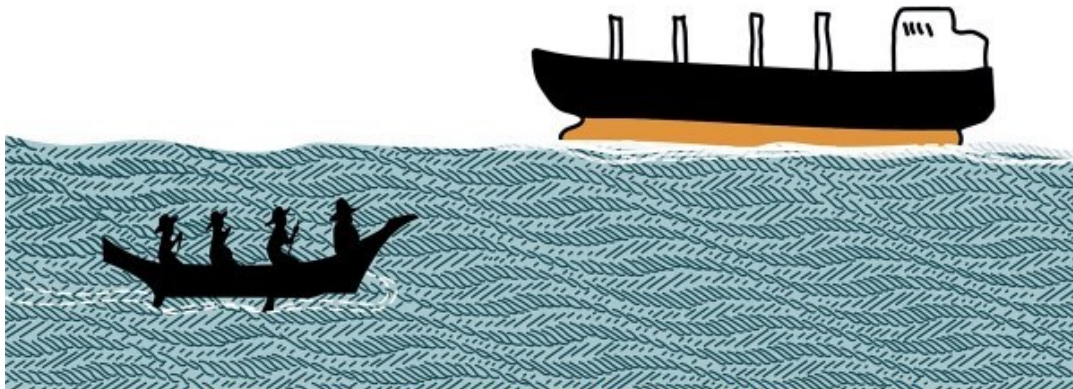
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The Social Fabric: Deep Local to Pan Global



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Manipulating the Threads of Culture: Contemporary *Shibori* Artist Yvonne Wakabayashi

Eileen Wheeler

In an undulating manipulation of sea forms, a Japanese sensibility merges with contemporary craft skills honed in the western world. Enfolded in the shapes of such textile works as **Waters Edge III** (Figure 1) by Canada's *shibori* expert, Yvonne Wakabayashi, are cultural memory and a family identity shaped by the sea and by emigration.¹ This paper explores how an individual artist embraces her identity within a social context rooted culturally in both east and west, negotiates the upheaval wrought on her parents' generation and creates art with a global reach that honours her ancestry. Deeply anchored in her practice of shaping and manipulating fibre are both the Japanese aesthetics absorbed at an early age at her mother's side and the inspiration of the natural environment Wakabayashi finds along the shores of her own birth place, Canada's west coast. The **Waters Edge** wall sculpture series, the work of a mature textile artist, is the culmination of these key influences.



Figure 1. *Waters Edge III*, 60" L x 21" W x 7" D (1.5m x .5m x 18cm) indigo dyed, arashi shibori, 3D forms. Image by Kenji Nagai, 2003.

¹ Lesley Richmond, Textile Artist: Yvonne Wakabayashi. *Nikkei Images - National Nikkei Museum and Heritage Centre Newsletter*, 10 (1) 2005, 4.

SHAPING IDENTITY

As a maker of sculpture, narrative wall hangings and fashion pieces Yvonne Wakabayashi of Burnaby, British Columbia has an international stature as an exhibiting textile artist. At the root of Wakabayashi's artistic focus are family attachments to two locales. The first is of her grandparents and parents to Sashima Island, home to Tasakas in Japan since the 1600s. Secondly is the relationship of Tasaka family members who emigrated, beginning in 1893, to Salt Spring Island, British Columbia. Here family history is intertwined with a livelihood from fishing and shipbuilding. The artist embraces her family of origin's relationship to the sea as inspiration; "I am drawn to the water...the patterns on the waters' edge, jelly fish, sea birds, the pebbles I collect – I relate it all to *shibori*."²

This creative focus coalesced with her first direct engagement with the historic textile arts of Japan. As a Master of Education student with a classical art history education and a visual arts training in drawing, painting and ceramics, the artist was searching for her artistic voice in the early 1980s when her art education instructor suggested a research trip to Japan. Here, the artist connected with her living relatives and discovered and embraced *shibori* (compressed, tied, dyed fabric) with its ancestral links that deeply honour craft while offering innovative contemporary possibilities.

On her sojourn to Japan, Yvonne Wakabayashi studied with indigo master and contemporary *shibori* artist, Hiroyuki Shindo. Both process and materials spoke to the young artist and teacher as she found a key medium in which to express herself. Traditionally *shibori* physically shapes silk and lends itself to visual and tactile forms. Metaphorically the surfaces almost invariably suggest images of the sea. *Arashi Shibori*, a refinement in the shaping techniques, entails making patterns that echo a rainstorm by tightly compressing fabric with wrapped threads around a pole before dyeing. Once dried, the folds are retained leaving a memory on the fabric. The process produces highly individual impressions of the touch of the artisan as the level of force applied and the nature of stitches shapes how the dye is recorded by the cloth.³

The cloth and tools utilized in the workshop spoke equally to the artist visiting Japan. Gunma silk retains its sericin allowing sculptural integrity. The narrow cloth sourced from Japan became a staple for Wakabayashi. Similarly, a tool was discovered. "I'm little... the *hera* fits in my hand; it's an extension of me." Conventionally used to spread *katazome* paste in a Japanese stencilling process, this textile artist uses the traditional tool to disperse and mix colour 'as she goes' in the contemporary practice of screen printing. "These precious ancestral materials, inspiring in themselves, allow me to merge ideas creating pieces that articulate simplicity and austerity."

Water's Edge III, illustrates the full development of Yvonne Wakabayashi's thematic and technical approach that coalesced in Japan. Emblematic of the country, indigo dye by its very nature sits on the surface as a lingering presence metaphorically maintaining the memory of her lineage. "The 'eastern' process of creating *arashi shibori* captivates and lures me to play and manipulate an undulating surface." Together with western printmaking techniques from her art

² Unless otherwise noted, all quotes are from personal communications with my friend Yvonne Wakabayashi (sometimes referred to as 'Yvonne'), October 31, 2002 to September 15, 2018 and are distinguished by Arial font.

³ Yoshiko Wada, *Memory on Cloth: Shibori now*, (New York: Kodansha International, 2002), 178.

education studies, *shibori* became central to her fashion-related teaching and her developing textile art form that would be exhibited at home and abroad.

These elements of fabric and tools uncovered in the artist's quest in Japan are linked with a design sensibility rooted in a young Yvonne Tasaka's family and culture. She outlines her early art education at home absorbing her mother Ayame Tasaka's approach to artistry. Ayame created a small space, perhaps just a corner with a well considered floral arrangement, that became a point of refuge during the stress of internment.⁴ "This was *her* space, her way of expressing herself ... There was no money for paintings... There were Japanese calendars, Japanese colours, utensils and ceramics for the tea ceremony. The table was set a certain way." The textile artist uses *ikebana*, the art of flower arranging, as an example of what she learned in her home with her mother and acknowledges that she absorbed traditional Japanese sensibilities, "always understated, reserved. That's why I wear black; I'm comfortable in subdued colours." These aesthetics, imbued with her mother's heritage, underpin the design principles she employs in her textile art as she arranges shapes, formulates textures and considers scale as she seeks to honour her heritage and interact with the natural world.

THE UNBROKEN THREAD

A personal goal to record family history was heightened for Yvonne Wakabayashi with the death of Ayame Tasaka in 1981. "I looked at my mother's high school yearbook [from 1920s Japan] and examined her school uniform. It was indigo and *ikat*!" Her mother and the other students are dressed in materials that not only speak of the fabric traditions of Japan but are evident in contemporary surface design techniques favoured by textile artists. The indigo dyeing and the resist tying of yarns before dyeing for subsequent weaving are traditional Japanese techniques. As an active indigo dyer, the textile artist was delighted to find a familial connection in the record of her mother's garments to the art she had studied alongside Japanese master practitioners. In effect it affirmed her choice of materials and a sense of belonging in her chosen field.

The topic of the Tasaka family's internment during the Second World War is not central to her life nor is it the direct focus of Yvonne Wakabayashi's art, but it appears as an unbroken thread in the background fabric of her own Japanese-Canadian family and the one into which she married, the Wakabayashis. It reverberates in any discussion of her parents whom she clearly cherished and her memorializing of them, a frequent motivation for her art.

At the beginning of the Second World War all people of Japanese ancestry were ordered 'as enemy aliens' to leave their homes near the coastline of British Columbia. Between 21,000 and 23,000 people, three quarters of whom were naturalized citizens or Canadian born, moved or were moved out of the protected area.⁵ In a sweeping action harsher than that taken by the United States on its Japanese citizens, Japanese Canadians lost businesses, farmlands, fishing boats and personal effects in addition to their homes and were discouraged from returning to the coast at

⁴ Eileen Wheeler, "Engaging Women's History Through Textiles: Enhancing Curricula with Narratives of Historical Memory," unpublished M.A. thesis, Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2005, 72.

⁵ Ted Ohashi and Yvonne Wakabayashi, *Tasaka*, (North Vancouver, BC: Self-published, 2005).

war's end.⁶ In the discussions of 'redress' over subsequent decades, it became evident that internment violated Japanese Canadians "on a personal level as individuals and families... and on a public level as Canadian citizens."⁷ For the Tasaka family, it was an exile to remote BC for seven years.



Figure 2. Detail of Ayame's school photo – mid 1920's, Japan. Image courtesy of Y. Wakabayashi.

⁶ Hans Tammemagi, "Japanese Internment: A look back at a dark side of British Columbia's History," *British Columbia Magazine*, 2018, 60 (3), 57.

⁷ K. E. McAllister, *Cultural production and alternative political practices: dialogic cultural forms and the public sphere in the Japanese Canadian community*. Unpublished MA Thesis, Burnaby: Simon Fraser University, 1993, 111.

As a textile artist, Wakabayashi, chooses to bypass internment in favour of cultural inheritance and her family's affinity for the sea, for example, as a subject nucleus for her art. In this focus she implicitly echoes the quiet dignity of the elders of her parents' generation toward their treatment at the hands of the Canadian government, "We have a saying, *shikatagana.i*" It is a Japanese term that approximates 'such is life' that indicates an unwillingness to focus on misfortune. Whereas some studies found that the incarceration of the Japanese was not only omitted from Canadian official history but was absent from family histories because many "dealt with their incarceration by refusing to acknowledge it..."⁸ *Tasaka*, a book written by the textile artist and her cousin Ted Ohashi takes another tack. Although western cultures may view *shikataganai* with some disapproval, it is actually a positive attitude [rather than passive acceptance], they assert, that allows people to put adversity behind them and move on. It is doubtful that Japanese-Canadians would have been able to adapt to life after internment as well as they did, they emphasize, if it was not for this liberating spirit.⁹

TIES THAT BIND

An unexpected outcome of internment was the emergence of dressmaking in the skill set of the extended family during their years in tiny communities such as one near Salmon Arm, British Columbia. These skills were honed out of necessity as no new clothes were available but also because temperatures plunged far lower than the mild coastal climate of Vancouver. It also presented an opportunity to Ayame Tasaka, mother of three (including Yvonne's two brothers) to clothe and bind her family together.

Yvonne Wakabayashi recalls, "...during the internment my mother was so resourceful...[she] recycled everything into useful clothes for her family." With little call for business attire (both Tasaka parents had lost their professional teaching jobs) some of husband Koji's clothes were transformed into outfits for Yvonne and her two brothers. "My brothers and I are wearing clothes made from my dad's suits." Yvonne remembers her mother's efforts to outfit her children for special days at school. "Being a visible minority and the only Asian kids in the school, our parents did what they could to help us to be accepted by other children and the community."

The photograph of an internee mother, bearing the weight of all that entailed, presents her children as she, on many levels, holds the family together. Mrs. Tasaka, in an outfit completed with a hat and fur trim that shows a cognizance of fashion, is a dignified presence. Yvonne acknowledges the effort that must have been involved in their appearance. "Dignity was always important." Her professional authority is gone but Ayame maintains her rights as a mother, in circumscribed circumstances, to care for as many aspects of her children's needs as possible drawing on a proficiency still available to her. Mrs. Tasaka demonstrates resolve, ingenuity and skill to present her children with the deportment of a proud family, powerless in circumstances, but undiminished in self-possession.¹⁰

⁸ McAllister, *Cultural Production*, 111.

⁹ Ohashi and Wakabayashi, *Tasaka*, 32.

¹⁰ Wheeler, "Engaging Women's History," 117.



Figure 3. Mrs. Tasaka and her children during internment, mid 1940s. (Image courtesy of Y. Wakabayashi).

Unlike her Canadian born husband, Ayame Tasaka had emigrated from Japan as a bride in 1937 and was still settling into her new country and learning English when the upheaval began. When uprooted from the newly constructed life as a wife, mother and professional teacher and plunged into uncertainty, Ayame was able to draw on skills honed in Japan. A photograph from the mid 1920s shows Ayame's dressmaking class in a well-appointed classroom. About forty identically clad young women, all with long single braids, are engrossed in their tasks. Three dressmaking forms are in one corner and a detailed pattern displayed across the blackboard indicates a sophisticated level of study. Ayame is one of a few advanced students seated at the front desk. The knowledge and expertise from this educational experience provide a means for Ayame to act some years later; to provide a foothold against an insecure future.

When the related families returned to the Vancouver area to re-establish their lives, three women set up dressmaking shops which doubled as much needed homes for numerous family members. On the family's return to Vancouver in 1949 Yvonne's parents could no longer teach and the family was supported in part by the business of Yvonne's mother. (The family lived in the back of the cramped premises that doubled as a stopover point for many dislocated family members.) That the artist chose to create visual narratives in textiles is rooted in her memories of this time, peeking over the curtain from her bunk bed and observing her mother sewing by the hour in the storefront. "The fact that my mother was a dressmaker has a total effect on what I'm doing."

THREADS OF CULTURE

Wakabayashi's art is not overtly political or brimming with resistance. With a resolve that reaffirms the perspective of her elders, the artist exercises her own agency subtly as she chooses her projects. For her narrative wall pieces in particular, Yvonne has consciously selected positive imagery; in this she personifies a family dynamic of resolve in the face of adversity. Oral historian, Paul Thompson reflects on how we interact with our history. It is "not just about events, or structures, or patterns of behaviour, but also about how these are experienced and remembered in the imagination".¹¹ There has been a purposeful selection in this maker's work to voice an affirmative narrative as she creates a permanent record of family memory. The artist's textile canvasses contain *her* memories, a way to create a permanent record of the lineage, the significance of family lore to her and her associations with the elements she chooses for designs. Furthermore, she subjectively defines her own cultural identity in what archeologist Christopher Tilley calls an objectification process such that "through making things people make themselves."¹²

Of the descendants from the seventeen surviving children of the artist's grandparents, all of whom were photographed on the Steveston, B.C. dock creating another touchstone of memory, many are engaged meaningfully with their heritage. Only Yvonne has the interest and the talent to preserve family memories for posterity in a visual way. By manipulating the surface of fabric, in this instance employing printing processes developed in the western world, she creates a similar entity to the photograph. The material form of the textile inseparably enmeshes visual meaning with memory, in turn creating an object of memory for future family.¹³

In one such memorial, *Tasaka Lifelines*, the materials themselves are imbedded with memory and illustrate what anthropologists have outlined as the semiotic potential of cloth which has almost limitless scope for communication.¹⁴ The background material is Japanese hemp embellished with antique *kasuri*, a durable fabric of the countryside emblematic of the resilience

¹¹ Paul Thompson, *The voice of the past: oral history* (3rd ed.), (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 162.

¹² Christopher Tilley, "Ethnography and Material Culture," In P. Atkinson (Ed.), *Handbook of Ethnography*, (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage 2001), 260.

¹³ Elizabeth Edwards, "Photographs as Objects of Memory," In M. Kwint, C. Breward & J. Aynsley (Eds.), *Material Memories*, (Oxford: New York: Berg, 1999), 235.

¹⁴ June Schneider and Annette Weiner, "Introduction," *Cloth and Human Experience*, (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989), 1.

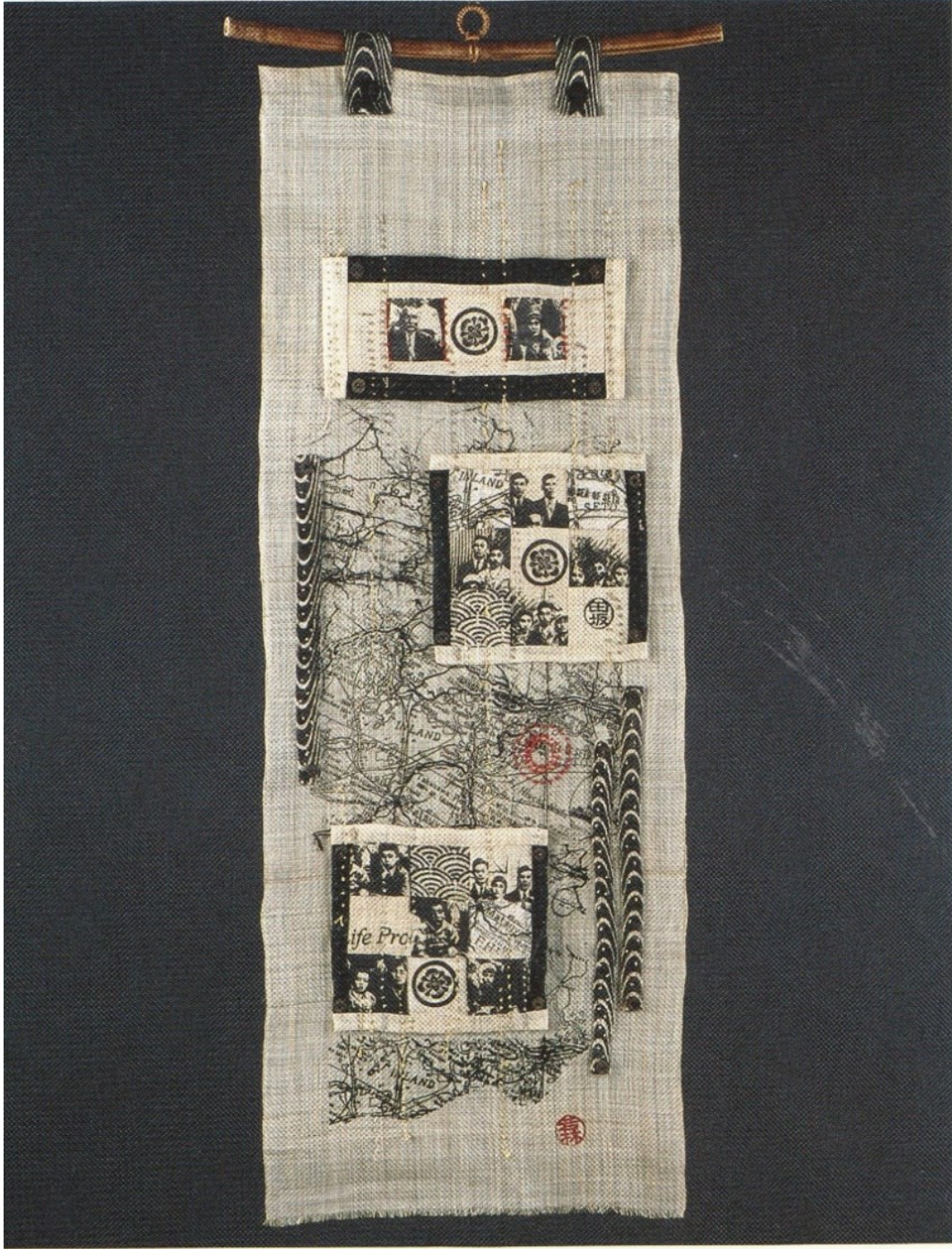


Figure 4. *Tasaka Lifelines*, 2004. 40" L x 14" W (102 cm x 36 cm), Image by Kenji Nagai.¹⁵

of the grandparents. They are positioned at the top of the wall piece to honour their emigration and hard work to provide for their large family. *Sashiko* stitching, a traditional technique ‘speaks’ to its strengthening ability as it binds layers of cloth for endurance. It outlines in red the ancestral home of the Tasakas near the Sea of Seto in Japan on the screen-printed map. Also screened, are fragments of the one photograph that records most of the family together in the

¹⁵ Matthew Kounis (ed.), *Art Textiles of the World: Canada*, (Brighton: Telos Art Publishing, 2009), 167.

early 1930s. Of the Tasaka family crest visible between the two photo prints at the bottom, Wakabayashi finds that the ancient family crest originally rendered in stone in the 1600s in Japan, has become a kind of signature or imprint of her own identity in the assembled textile.

The artist gathers other meaningful elements in her design process. How Yvonne contemplates and arranges various elements on her canvas of un-dyed natural hemp sourced in Japan, is influenced by her early studies with eminent Canadian artist and friend Gordon Smith (“my teacher for life”). As she adds layers of meaning, the hemp is stiffened with resin and shaped on a *shibori* pole, a touch of gold echoes Japanese woodblock screens and lines of traditional *sashiko* stitching are added. A dash of sheen from her mother’s black calligraphy paper leads the eye in the composition. A spool of linen thread given to her decades earlier by Penny Gouldstone, her University of BC instructor who first encouraged her to go to Japan, provides tufts that rise beyond the surface. Finally, both the Tasaka and Wakabayashi crests add her signature to this metaphorical design.

This work of textile art serves as an example of how Wakabayashi has selected and arranged memories by ‘authorial ordering’ or constructing a memory around a favoured image as a focus that can later ‘be read.’¹⁶ It is graced with the added intimacy and meaning that design derived through thought, personal connection and labour can provide. In this she has assembled a textile language as she creates layers of imagery and evocative surfaces that can be ‘read’ as objects of material culture. “The work closest to my heart are pieces such as these that have become objects of memory to be shared with family.” Laurel Thayer Ulrich finds family identities, as well as personal ones, “are built from selective fragments of the past – names, stories, and material possessions...that can be lost or re-created, abandoned or invented” over time.¹⁷ By manipulating the surface of fabric the artist has engaged her own ties to her ancestral past to create ties that connect current and future family to their heritage.

MELDING EAST AND WEST

It is the textile process of *Arashi Shibori* that ‘spoke’ to Yvonne Wakabayashi decades ago in Japan that has become a key medium to honour the past and engage the present. Although many wall pieces have elements of *shibori*, it is in the artist’s freestanding sculptures that this form soars through her methods of manipulation. The universal skills of needlework, the Eastern origins of *shibori* and the Western development of printmaking are melded by her hand to create sculptures that express her interplay with her local environment that also have international appeal.

Wakabayashi’s vision as an artist and the choices she makes in both processes and materials imbued with memory are evident in her own words that embrace her heritage and identity:

My visual expression is a ‘blending’ of cultural sensitivities of east and west; old and new; both in ideas and processes. The

¹⁶ Edwards, “Photographs as Objects of Memory,” 231.

¹⁷ Laurel Thayer Ulrich, *The Age of Homespun: Objects and stories in the creation of an American myth*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2001), 135.

textile history of Japan inspires me, ‘connects’ me, and fulfils me with a feeling of belonging to a familial heritage. This defines who I am and comforts me in knowing where I belong.¹⁸

As the conservator of memory, Yvonne Wakabayashi is at pains to point out that she is a “hyphenated” Canadian that even her own name demonstrates. She does not see her role as re-creating things Japanese but in synthesizing two cultures in her textiles.

As the foremost practitioner of *arashi shibori* in Canada, Wakabayashi combines ancient and new techniques to “create works that metaphorically reflect her interest in water.”¹⁹ Returning to *Waters Edge III* (Figure 1), a close inspection of the sculpture reveals myriad forms that are inspired by the designer’s penchant for collecting interesting shapes on her walks by the ocean in coastal BC. Her choice of imagery is embedded in her family as the sea is the defining feature of Sashima Island, the ancestral home of her mother and paternal grandparents and the family’s continuing ties to Saltspring Island, BC. Presenting the sea as metaphor offers us an ‘interpretive thread’, a term used by Christopher Tilley. It enables us, he asserts, to pursue the human quest to achieve understanding as we forge a connection between juxtaposed elements, between the known and the unknown.²⁰ In the wall piece considered above, the artist juxtaposes imagery from two sites; of her grandparents and their offspring in Steveston, BC and their ancestral home ensuring that their sacrifices and accomplishments are not forgotten in the context of Canadian history. The strains of emigration and internment in her own family and the one into which she married, suggests another reason the imagery of family and the sea are intertwined in her craft; the sea endures.

The imagery that expresses Yvonne Wakabayashi’s local and global attachments is evident as she transforms the stiffened hemp or silk into pleats of *shibori* that organically echo the sea as it receives or resists dye or steam. Three dimensional forms may be used for shaping and bead embellishments, often made from shells, detail marine-like forms. In *Nautilus*, (Figure 5) the balancing of elements such as the sea creature’s antennae seems to echo the aesthetics of *ikebana* learned at her mother’s side. The artist speaks of the appeal of *shibori* in these words, “Its textures are evocative of the ever-changing waves of the ocean and of the Tasaka ancestral island in Japan that features thematically in much of my earlier work.”

It is as a sought-after educator, largely in post secondary textile design and fashion programs that further cohered Wakabayashi’s approach to textiles over the decades with its balance of Eastern heritage and contemporary Western processes. “I can bring two cultures together...this is the Canadian part; it’s multicultural. Teaching makes you find out about the contemporary scene. The processes ...like French *devoré* [fabric burnout most evident in her fashion pieces] are so global.” The process of ‘cutting away’ both echoes modern *devoré* and ancient *katazome* (dyeing fabrics using a resist paste) that had been the focus of the designer’s graduate

¹⁸ Artists’ Statement, 2002.

¹⁹ Lesley Richmond, *Textile Artist: Yvonne Wakabayashi*, 4.

²⁰ Christopher Tilley, *Metaphor and material culture*, (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 8 and Tilley, “Ethnography and Material Culture,” 262.



Figure 5. Nautilus, modified pole wrapping
15" H (36 cm), Image by Kenji Nagai, 2012.



Figure 6. Yvonne Wakabayashi, Image by Kenji Nagai, 2018.

work decades earlier and more recently employed in her prize winning Artwear garments.²¹ Both create negative space as design elements. Referring to her years in Canadian fashion classrooms of her own until 2002 and those she subsequently visited as a guest lecturer, the artist stresses the ‘reciprocal’ relationship, how teaching and interacting with dynamic students enhanced her blending of modern elements with ancient practices in wearable designs.

As an active participant in international exhibitions, two such garments of Yvonne Wakabayashi’s design (Figure 7) were in Powerhouse Museum’s 2011-2013 *Love Lace*, an exhibition in Sydney, Australia that provocatively questioned traditional concepts of lace.²² For this challenge the *shibori* elements became less apparent in her singular garments. Japanese wool jersey, felted so it will not fray, was incised to create a unique pattern with complex surfaces. Marine like 3D forms adorn the unstructured fashions that encourage experimentation on the part of the wearer.

With many honours, awards and successful art exhibitions behind her, it is the charitable support she can offer that gives her deep satisfaction. In conversation with Yvonne, the notion of bestowal or the sacrifices of her parents’ generation surfaces frequently. “I record the values and sense of self that have been bestowed on me.”²³ The act of giving connects her to the example set by her parents. She recently provided garments for a fashion show fundraiser and donated

²¹ One example is First Prize, Dressed to Thrill, Yeiser Art Center, Paducah, Kentucky in 2004. See full list on the artist’s website www.yvonnewakabayashi.com

²² <http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/lovelace>, accessed 29 May 2014

²³ Yvonne Wakabayashi, *Artist’s Statement*, March, 2014.

sculptural pieces in support of 1200 Japanese orphans from the 2011 tsunami; this gave her great pleasure. As destructive as the sea can be, she hopes to offer from her own experience, its soothing potential.



Figure 7. Wearable Art lace dresses, felted katazome, wool jersey. Image by Kenji Nagai, 2011.

From this global perspective it is apt to conclude here with a most local one, that of family. To her present and future family, the artist has constructed threads that bind them to their history. This is most evident in her wall hanging tribute on the passing of her father, Koji Tasaka in 1997. This so moved Koji's great grand niece, that she wrote a poem in response to it.

In a nod to Canadian born Koji's culture of origin, *A Tribute to Koji* (Figure 8) is a large wall piece; all components are carefully chosen in a narrative shrine that layers meanings. "The

piece for my dad had to be indigo. It ‘says’ Japan [as does] *shibori*, binding, clamping, tying...”. Some of the panels purposefully hang separately to evoke the ritual of *omikuji*. In this tradition blessings and predictions of fortune are written on randomly picked pieces of paper at Japanese temples (the positive ones are kept). Illustrating Koji Tasaka’s position as a leader of the Japanese community in Vancouver, the Emperor of Japan had earlier bestowed a recognition award on Koji Tasaka. “I still use the crest of my father’s certificate in my work... the Emperor’s chrysanthemum imagery, calligraphy with Dad’s name, basically to record and remember my father and share with my family. I use it all the time...in gratitude...” To visually record family members, the aforementioned group photograph is screened centrally in the tribute. Imbedded in the silk, Yvonne’s family



Figure 8. Detail of *Tribute to Koji*. Silk, cotton, screen-printing, indigo dyed shibori, 1997. Image courtesy of Y. Wakabayashi.²⁴

²⁴ The full *Tribute to Koji* 46” L x 26” (117 cm x 66 cm) can be viewed on the artist’s website www.yvonnewakabayashi.com

Member could find her direct link to her ancestry and those of the 50 cousins of the subsequent generation whose relationships were forged by counting on each other. Leah Kitamura's poem is her response to these threads of memory.

Memory

Tattooed in my skin
is my history
the crest of the family
the seventeen children
an old photograph
the Inland sea
journey
liberation
life
Panel One is indigo, a colour of Japan,
the dye seeps in and leaves a memory
Panel Two is the Inland sea, a map of our
Great grandfather's journey to Canada
Panel Three are images of the lives lived,
faces of our family, friendly villages, activities
Panel Four is our crest, with indigo water
stains sharing space, lingering
Panel Five is more faces of our friends,
the family, left on silk
Panel Six is another part of the Inland Sea
Panel Seven is the indigo, that's me

As the field of memory study has shown, creating one's own objects of memory, albeit shared on a wider stage, can preserve a sense of family that overcomes a history of dislocation.²⁵ If a thread of dislocation was woven through the Tasaka/Wakabayashi history it was more than met by a 'can do,' 'will do' family motto of resiliency illustrated by the positive outcomes abundant in their ranks. For her part, as Yvonne Wakabayashi engaged her identity as a Japanese Canadian in the language of textiles, she crafted her own receptacles of memory with gratitude as touchstones for her kin.

²⁵ Gaynor Kavanagh, What is memory? and Remembering and forgetting. In *Dream spaces: memory and the museum*. London: Leicester University Press, 2000, 23.

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