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Pattern Research Project: An Investigation of The Pattern And Printing Process - Kiku

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Kiku

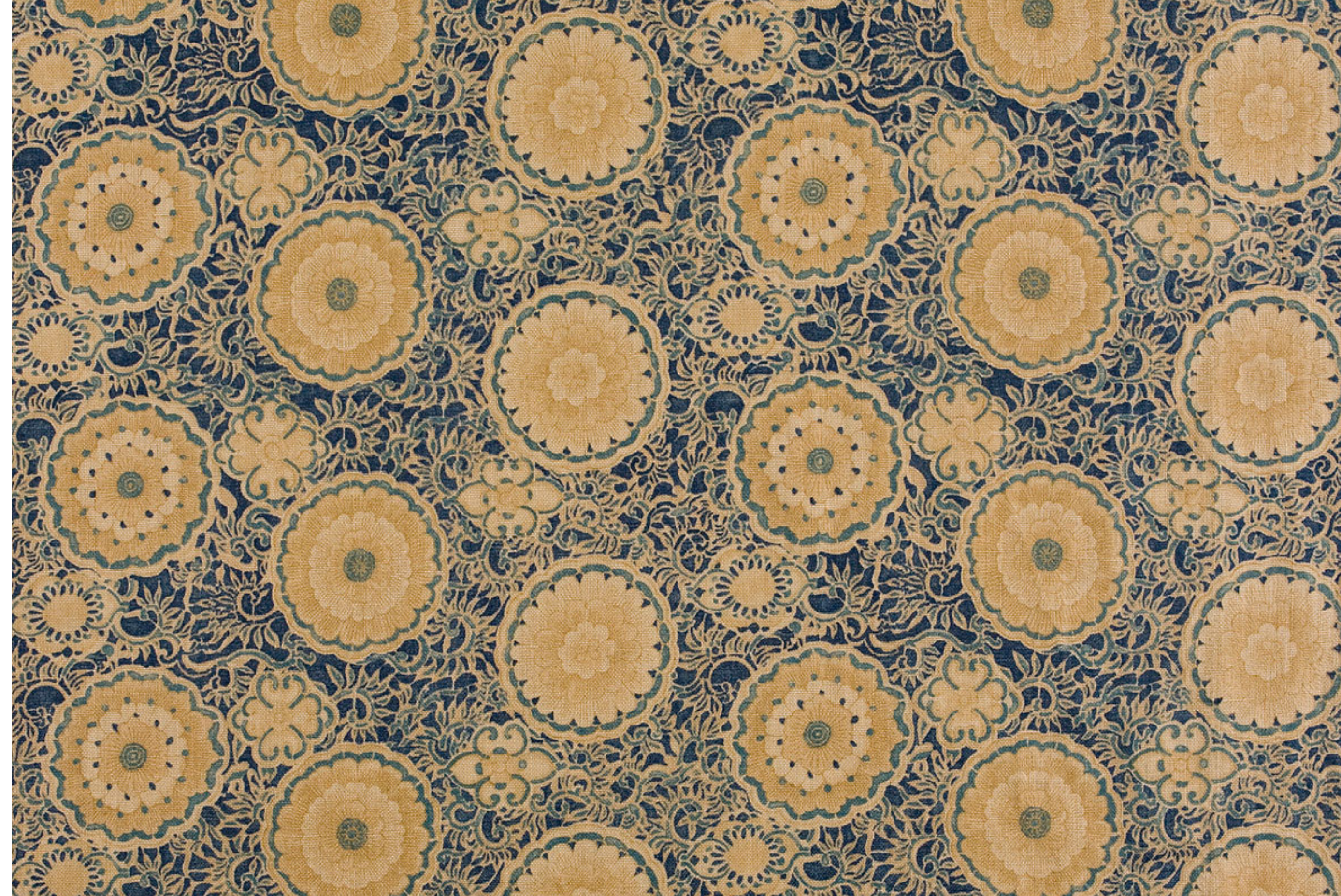


KIKU

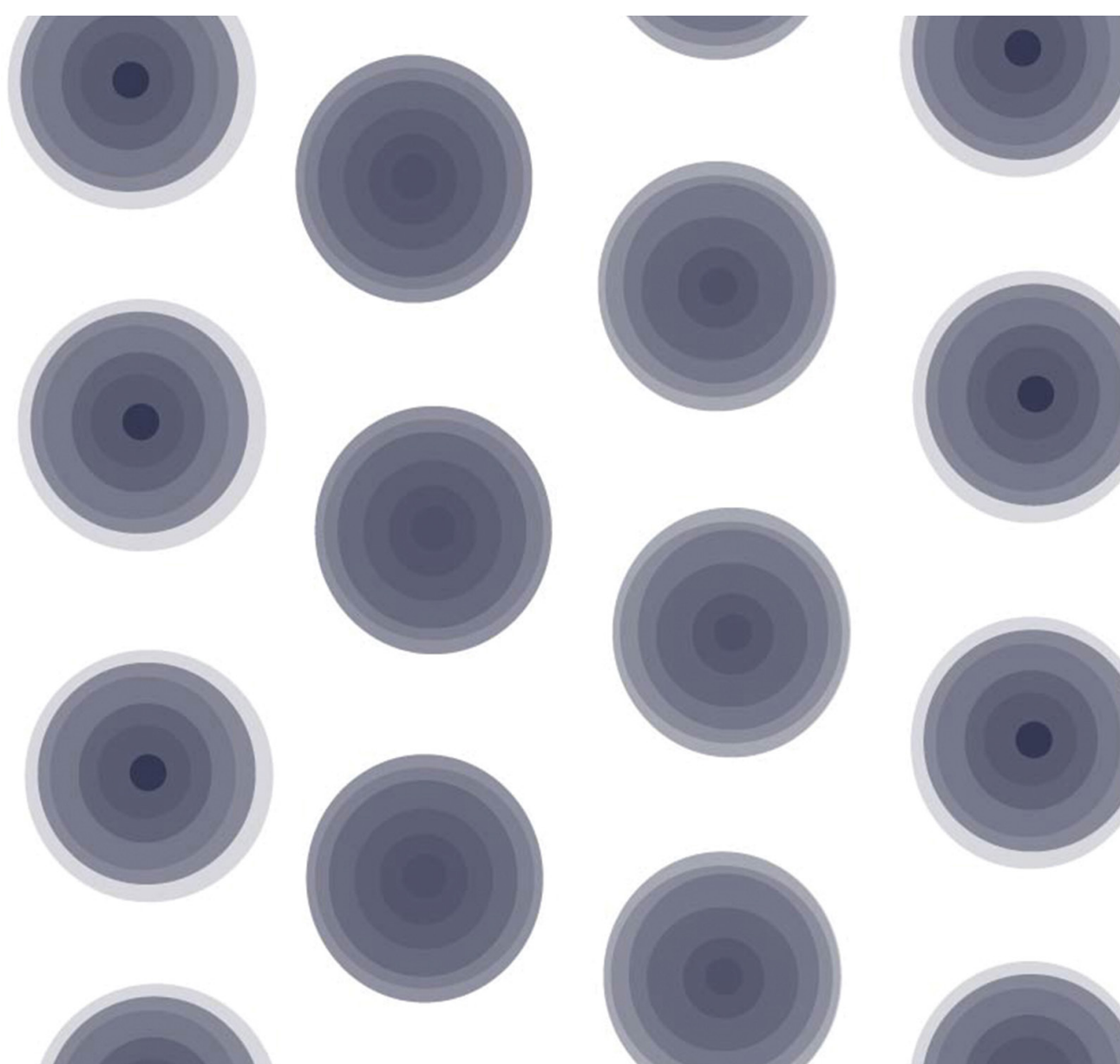
Chrysanthemum - Japanese Traditional Pattern
Yufei Zheng

History and Culture

The creation of the Kiku pattern was the result of direct communication via a diplomatic envoy and the trade between China and Japan during the 8th century establishment of the Tang dynasty of China and the Nara Period of Japan (710-794 AD). This is the time period where the chrysanthemum flower was introduced to Japan. The Chrysanthemum flower pattern does not appear until the early Heian period (794-1185 AD) and it becomes a very popular motif used by the Japanese throughout the whole country in the Kamakura period (1185-1333 AD) and onward (Mizoguchi, 1973). You can see the Kiku motif on everything; from kimonos, samurai armor, houseware, pottery, stationary, paintings, house decorations, and Shinto shrine roof decorations. In Japanese culture, the chrysanthemum flower symbolizes longevity, rejuvenation, and autumn. Some people believed that if you drank chrysanthemum tea you would gain a longer life (Blakemore, 1906-1997).



Kiku, textile
Pattern repeat: 10.75"v and 6", Half drop repeat
Suzanne Tucker. (n.d.). Kiku [Photography]. Retrieved from <http://suzannetuckerhome.com/product/kiku/>



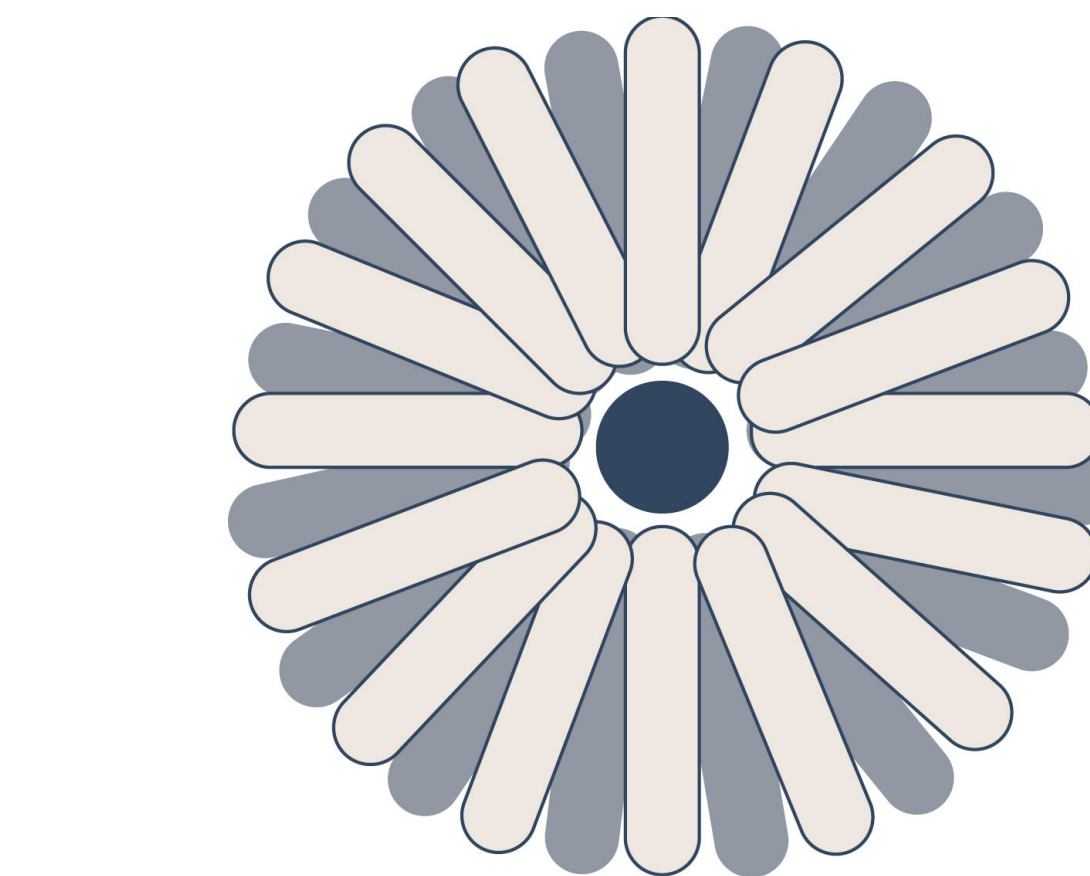
Simplify Kiku motif



Ragiku (Spider chrysanthemum)

Japanese Indigo Dye

Japanese indigo dye, called aizome in Japanese, produces a deep blue color called "Japan blue". It was told to have been introduced from India through the Silk Road trade route. At first, the indigo was only used for aristocrats and samurai and it was not in the use of common people until the 17th-century. It's used on everyday items including: kimonos, hand towels, and beddings. Indigo is not just a pretty deep blue color, it is also has antibacterial properties, has the effect of repelling insects, and prevents odors. Clothing made out of the indigo dye is use as a cure for skin problem (Japan, 2015). All the colors on the futon cover are applied with a natural indigo dye. The indigo color comes from the leaves of Japan's Ai plant. Ai, in Japanese, means indigo and love. It also has its own god named Aizen Shin. Farmers would pray to the god and hope to have a great start of the day. The process of getting the blue color is very time-consuming. The leaves must first be dried and fermented. Then it would be mixed with lye, lime, and other things into a vat and further fermented. The dye needs high attention, you must stir at least four times a day, every day to oxidize it. The vat must be heated at all times to keep the dye at its high peak. The dying process is a repeat of dipping, removing, oxidizing, rinsing, and drying the cloth. The more you repeat the process, the darker the blue will become. When you first dye the cloth, it will not be in blue color, but in yellow or green. The reason that it turns blue is caused by the oxygen in the air (Wong, 2017).



Kikumon-Traditional/formalized Kiku pattern design.

Precedent

Chrysanthemum flower patterns are widely used in Japan. There is no definite Kiku pattern because over five thousand varieties of the patterns have been created by the Japanese (Blakemore, 1906-1997). The textile is said to be inspired by a 19th-century Japanese futon (bedding) cover (Suzanne,2018). The futon cover during that time period was made out of 100% Japanese cotton and dyed with Japanese indigo. Japanese artisans found that the cotton turned out to be a better material for the purpose of bedding and indigo dye can easily adhere to the cotton fabric (KimonoBoy, 2018). There are two types of futon covers during that period of time: katazome, and tsutsugaki.

Katazome

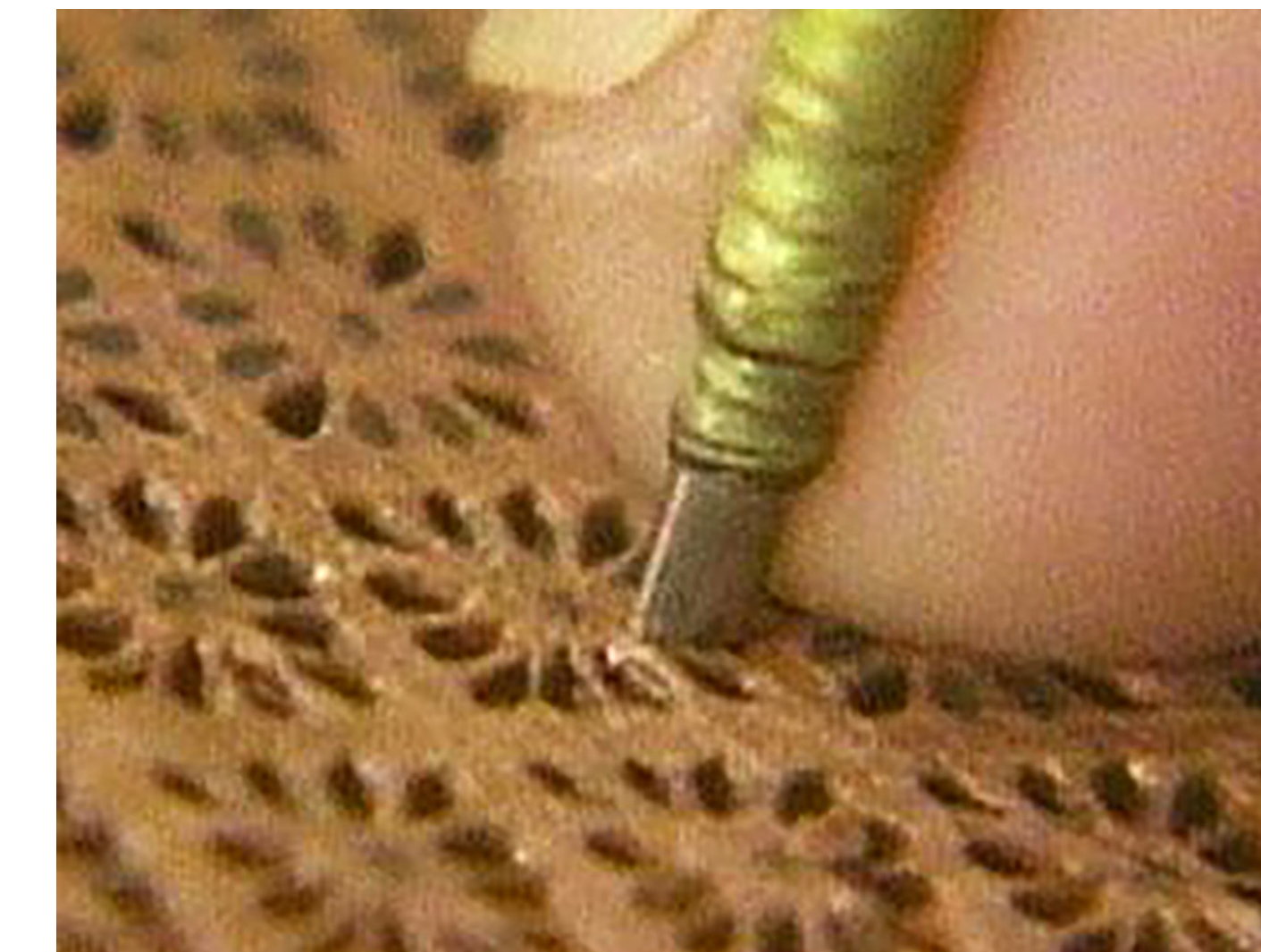
Katazome is a Japanese resist-dyeing technique using the stencil. The materials used in the process are rice paste, stencil, and indigo. The rice paste is a combination of rice husks, lime, and water. Sometime, a color will be added to the rice paste for the clearance of the pattern. The rice paste is spread across the fabric through the stencil using a spatula. The fabric is put into hot water to ensure the indigo dye will dye evenly on to the fabric. Then you put the fabric into the blue color dye. The number of times the fabric is submerged in the dye will determine how deep the blue color is. The fabric is to be then put under the sun and left to set into the cotton fabric. The second to last process is to wash the resist paste off, by first washing it in the hot water, using a brush to scrape the paste off, and washing it in the cold water. The last process is to wait for the fabric to be dry (Jackson, 2015). However, katazome can not be accomplished without the stencil, katagami.



Applying paste to the fabric with katagami
Jackson, A. (2015, 30 April). Applying paste to the fabric. [Photography by Anna Jackson]. Retrieved from <https://www.vam.ac.uk/blog/newsjapanese-stencil-dyeing>

Katagami

Katagami, also called as ise- katagami, is the paper stencil used to imprint the pattern onto the fabric. The process of carving the pattern is a challenging task. The craftsmen behind the stencil carving takes years of training and practicing until they create these exquisite paper stencils. These intricate stencils cannot be created without the properly prepared papers (Condell, 2016). Layers of wash papers are bonded together using persimmon tannin liquid to create the stencil papers. A sheet of the stencil paper will contain three layers of wash paper. Each sheet of wash paper is carefully laid on top of the next one using a brush to press it down. Then each paper will be placed on top of a wood panel for drying under the sun. At last, the papers will be hung vertically and put into a smoke room for up to 7-10 days (Omiya, 2017). In the end, the white wash papers will turn into this copper brown color. The persimmon tannin makes the paper waterproof (Condell, 2016). Different sizes of sharpened carving knives are used during the carving process (Omiya, 2017).



Zoom in on the carving stencil paper process
Kiriko Made. (n.d.). Zoom in of carving the stencil paper. [Photography]. Retrieved from <https://kirikomade.com/pages/katazome>



Kimono
Daderot. (2013, 4 July). Kimono [Photography]. Retrieved [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kimono_\(tunsoke\)_probably_used_as_a_theatrical_costume_view_1_-_Japan_early_to_mid_20th_century_silk_gold_and_silver_thread_gold_dust_-_Textile_Museum_of_Canada_-_DSC00867.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kimono_(tunsoke)_probably_used_as_a_theatrical_costume_view_1_-_Japan_early_to_mid_20th_century_silk_gold_and_silver_thread_gold_dust_-_Textile_Museum_of_Canada_-_DSC00867.JPG)



Samurai Helmet
Nguyen, Marie-Lan (2012). Parade Helmet [Photography]. Retrieved from https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/3d/Parade_helmet_VandA_M.52-1909.jpg

Kikumon

The chrysanthemum was first used by the Emperor Go-Toba (1180- 1239) as the imperial crest. In 1868, Kikumon, or the Japanese imperial seal, was a specific Kiku pattern that was designed for the Japanese imperial family. The official chrysanthemum symbol, with sixteen petals front and back, is said to have evolved from a sun emblem associated with the mythological ancestor of the Japanese, the sun goddess (Blakemore, 1906-1997). Other than the imperial seal, Kikumon was used in modern Japan as it's national visual identity because the chrysanthemum is Japan's national flower. You can find it today on the Japanese passports, the royal family's official documents, and on the 50 yen coins but with a different number in petals. There was a period of time in the Meiji period (1868-1912 AD) where no one other than the imperial family was allowed to use the imperial seal. Now the Kikumon is able to be used freely by the public (Allen, 1945).

Contemporary

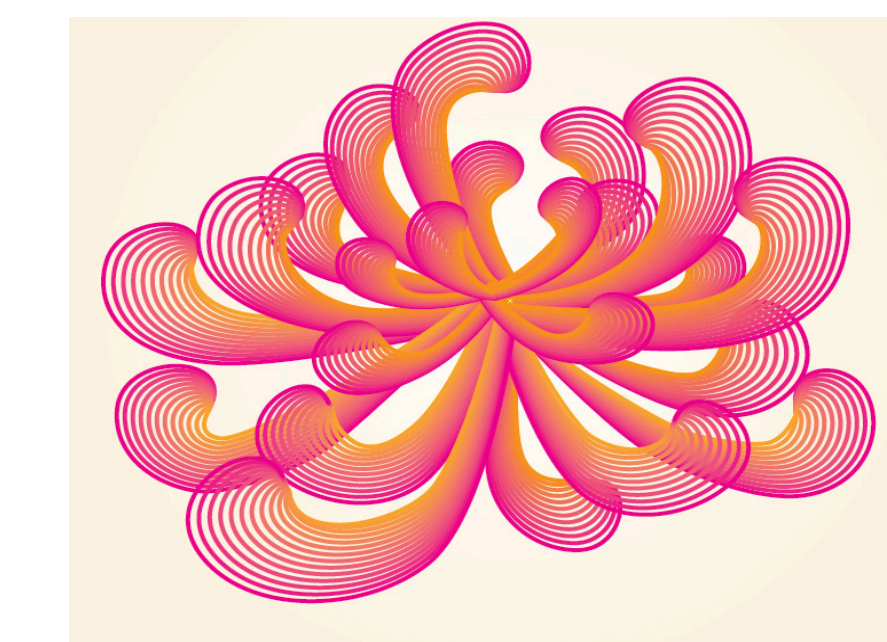
The contemporary Kiku motif only depicted on the outline of the precedent Kiku pattern. There are lotus roundels and interlocking arabesques on the background to act as the sub-patterns layered as they create a more complex pattern (Suzanne, 2018). The pattern sample is made out of 100% yarned-dyed plain weaved linen. Linen is made from the fibers that grow inside of the flax plant. It takes about two processes to extract the fibers from the plant; threshing, and retting (Tailor, 2013). The textile is airo finish, which means the linen was thrashed using air until it was soft to the touch. The sample feels smooth and soft compared to the regular linen fabric. The color blue used in the textile is inspired by the original 19th-century Japanese futon cover. This textile also comes in green and red colors. The pattern and color are digital screen printed with ink in the UK (A. Jones, personal communication, September 17, 2018).

Tsutsugaki

Tsutsugaki is a resist dye technique where the resist paste is being applied directly by hand. The craftsman will put the rice paste into a cone-shaped tube made out of wash paper as a drawing utensil by squeezing the paste out on to the cotton fabric. The creation of the design is not a single process. The craftsman will do an initial base dye by outlining the design. Then the fabric will be dried and the paste will be washed off. The process will repeat to add details in the areas that are not dyed by the indigo (KimonoBoy, 2018).

Evolution

The evolution of the Kiku pattern reflects on the changes in technology over time. The contemporary Kiku pattern from Suzanne Tucker Home is digitally produced, while the precedent pattern is hand crafted.



Contemporary Kiku Drawing Using Adobe Illustrator

Gladys (MFA student at The University of Texas at Arlington). (2012). Chrysanthemum Illustration [Adobe Illustrator]. 2012 Fall Research Project. Retrieved November 27, 2018 from <https://mfajourney.wordpress.com>

Contemporary Screenprint

Warhol, Andy (Artist). (2018). KiKu (Blue, White, Red) [Screenprint in Colors]. Bonhams, New York. Retrieved November 27, 2018 from <https://bidtoart.com>



19th- Century Japanese Futon Cover
Victoria and Albert Museum (19th century). Futon cover, Japan [Photograph]. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Retrieved from <http://www.vam.ac.uk>



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