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The Logic of Rain

A Unique Collection of Japanese Katagami Stencils for Dyeing Kimono Fabrics

Edited by Wolfgang Scheppe

ISBN	9783039422357
Publisher	Scheidegger & Spiess
Binding	Hardback
Territory	World excluding Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Puerto Rico, United States, Canada, and Japan
Size	320 mm x 240 mm
Pages	320 Pages
Illustrations	209 color, 15 b&w
Price	£75.00

- Showcases highlights from the world's largest collection of Japanese katagami dyeing stencils for samurai kimonos
- First-ever publication of around 140 outstanding katagami from the hitherto little-known collection held by the Museum of Decorative Arts (Kunstgewerbemuseum) at Dresden's Pillnitz Palace
- Lavish book design with some 220 illustrations, the majority in colour and full-page size
- Essays by international scholars explore all aspects of these fascinating works of Japanese applied art in detail

For 125 years, the Museum of Decorative Arts (Kunstgewerbemuseum) at Dresden's Pillnitz Palace has been home to a treasure trove of Japanese craftsmanship that has remained largely unknown. It consists of 92 cassettes holding more than 15,000 dyeing stencils for textile printing. These so-called katagami were used primarily for fabrics from which the kimonos of samurais were tailored. They show geometric ornaments as well as patterns and motifs depicting elements of nature in virtuoso abstraction, and were handmade from mulberry bark in a lengthy process and engraved using the finest cutting techniques. Fabrics decorated with katagami prints came to Europe in the 19th century and soon had a strong influence on fine and applied art as well as emerging industrial design. This ancient technique remains influential today in graffiti and street art, for example in the works of celebrated street artist and political activist Banksy.

This opulent book features for the first time around 140 katagami of outstanding quality from the unique Dresden collection. The selection is dedicated to the representation of rain and water, which have been of major spiritual and cultural significance throughout Japan's history. Some 220 illustrations, mainly in full colour, are supplemented with essays by international scholars, who explore in detail all aspects of these fascinating works of Japanese applied art.

With contributions by Edmund de Waal, Yuki Ikeda, Yuki Ikuda, Bernhard Scheid, Johannes Wenninger.

Wolfgang Scheppe is a German philosopher, author, and curator, and the director of Arsenale Institute for Politics of Representation in Venice. His work as a theorist frequently includes the medium of exhibitions taking a form described as "theory installations."

Publish date 10th May 2027