

Blue Gold: The Art and Science of Indigo

Mingei International Museum

Featured Artists

Shelly Jyoti – Shelly Jyoti is a visual artist, fashion designer, poet, and an independent curator whose work references the cultural context of Indian history. Her work focuses on Gandhi's ideology of nation building for creating moral and peaceful societies. She works with various media excavating India's colonial history, and her work explores the impact of the cultivation and export of indigo. She lives and works in India.

Jyoti will be giving an in-person talk during opening weekend on September 15, 2024.

Youngmin Lee – Youngmin Lee, born and raised in Korea, currently lives and works in the Bay Area. Trained in fashion design, she began exploring the traditional Korean textile art of *bojagi* following her move to the United States and has since become both a renowned artist and teacher of this art form. While traditional *bojagi* is considered a wrapping cloth, Youngmin expands the medium, creating new forms.

Porfirio Gutiérrez – Porfirio Gutiérrez is a contemporary artist based both in Oaxaca, Mexico and Ventura, California. He comes from a generational family of weavers and dyers in Mexico, and draws upon this generational practice and ancient iconographies to create his woven works. His immersive installation features eight panels of hand-dyed and woven wool, evoking ancestral and indigenous knowledge of indigo, and the migration both of this knowledge, and of people across borders.

Gutiérrez will be presenting a Master Craftsman Lecture at Mingei on November 22, 2024.

Christina Kim – Christina Kim is a South Korean-born artist and fashion designer based in Los Angeles. She is the founder of the design house Dosa. In her own design practice, she works with traditional craftspeople from around the world and the Americas, and has been noted for her extensive use of traditional materials, including indigo dyed cloth. *Blue Gold* features several works by Kim, including an installation of indigo-dyed *papel picado*, produced in collaboration with artists in Oaxaca, Mexico, and a couture skirt and coat from her fashion line crafted from indigo fabric dyed in China. Several of Kim's works are part of the Mingei permanent collection unveiled during their 2021 reopening. They include two cut paper interlayers for the windows in the Nakashima Board Room and a series of flowing temporary curtains to be used within the galleries during transitioning exhibitions.

Arianne King Comer – Arianne King Comer is an artist, indigo and community arts advocate, and teacher living in Charleston, South Carolina. She has studied indigo traditions all over the world, and founded Ibile Indigo House on St. Helena Island, inspired both by her studies of Nigerian indigo with Yoruba master artist Nike Davies (Chef Nike Okundayo), and the history of indigo plantations in South Carolina.

Laura Kina – Laura Kina is a professor of art at DePaul University in Chicago. Her research-based studio practice is focused on Okinawan diasporic identity and draws inspiration from personal and ancestral narratives, photographs of her everyday life and travels, family and community photo albums, archival research, and oral history. Her textile work draws inspiration from the tradition of Japanese *boro* textiles, the use of indigo in traditional tattoos from Okinawa, together with quilting traditions from Hawaii.

Rosa Chang – Rosa Chang, born in Seoul, South Korea, lives in Baltimore, MD. She is an artist, writer, and gardener committed to sustaining a harmonious balance between humans and the natural world. Her recent children's book on indigo, entitled *My Indigo World: A True Story of the Color Blue*, features her watercolor drawings, some of which will be on view in the exhibition. For the exhibition, Rosa has developed an interactive map with objects from the exhibition and identifying where indigo grows in the world.

Sarah Winston – Sarah Myriam Winston has been designing, dyeing and weaving apparel and accessories, as well as preserving collectible textiles for over two decades. Based in San Diego, her dual cultural heritage from Switzerland and Nigeria is reflected in her hand-dyed, handwoven work. Her mentors are the traditional weavers and dyers of South Asia, Japan, and West Africa. Her work is a series of silk panels demonstrating the range of blues that can be achieved using fresh indigo.

Collaborations

Erin Rodgers, Kendra Johnson and Karen Hall – These three artists collaborated to envision, design, fabricate, and dye an ensemble of clothing that might have been worn by a woman known as Hagar – an enslaved woman on a South Carolina indigo plantation who was renowned for her knowledge of indigo cultivation and processing. Johnson, a costume designer and professor of theater at Clemson University, researched historic clothing of the period and designed the ensemble. Erin Rodgers, a Lecturer at Clemson and Manager of the Costume Shop in the Department of Performing Arts, fabricated the clothing. Karen Hall, an expert indigo dyeing, dyed the ensemble.

Dr. Brandon Ballenger, Dr. Benjamin Dubansky, Mrs. Lou Ann Moses and others – This collaboration, which involved many participants, is entitled *Le Bleu Perdue* (or The Lost Blue). The primary partners are scholars, researchers, and artists from Louisiana State University, and indigenous cultural specialists from the Coco Tribe of Cannechi Tinne of Louisiana. The collaborators cultivated what was believed to be a lost strain of indigo native to Louisiana. They extracted the dye using traditional techniques and dyed traditional indigenous garments, one of which will be on view in the exhibition. The team of biologists and artists at the university explored the use of natural indigo to dye histology slides for study under a microscope. They produced large scale images which will be shown in the exhibition.