KIMONO AS ART: EXHIBITING AND STAGING JAPANESE CULTURE
IN CANTON, OHIO

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This study is very personal to me as a large part of it takes place in an area that was so influential during my formative years. I attribute much of my interest in the fields of Museum Studies, Asian American Studies and American Studies to the experiences, positive and negative, that I had growing up in and around Canton, Ohio.

I would like to acknowledge the assistance of the many people who helped me throughout this project. The Canton Museum of Art and its staff, especially director M.J. Albacete, were very helpful in answering questions and putting me in contact with volunteers who were involved in the exhibition, *Kimono as Art: The Landscapes of Itchiku Kubota*. I would also like to thank the museum’s marketing director, Mary Byrne, who provided me with a plethora of ephemera and information on the exhibition, as well as Robb Hankins of ArtsinStark who spoke to me about ArtsinStark’s involvement in the arts revival in Canton, Ohio.

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

“It’s gotten so big, I’m calling it kimono-mania... We approached Canton hosting ‘Kimono’ from day one with the idea of having a community-wide celebration.”

In the spring of 2009, the Canton Museum of Art hosted the largest exhibition ever held at the museum, *Kimono as Art: The Landscapes of Itchiku Kubota*. At a cost of over $1 million, in a time when most museums were carefully watching their finances and cutting back on expenses, the Canton Museum of Art (CMA) along with a county arts initiative, ArtsinStark, put together “*KimonoFest*,” a series of Japanese cultural events to accompany the exhibition, in the small northeastern Ohio town of Canton. The preliminary excitement generated by the exhibition was infectious and eventually nearly eighty Japanese cultural events were organized by a number of local arts and educational organizations to be held in conjunction with the exhibition.

Over fifty-five thousand visitors attended the exhibition at the Canton Museum of Art making it the most popular exhibition in the museum’s history.\(^1\) In comparison, the second most popular previous exhibition at the museum, an exhibition of Norman Rockwell paintings, attracted only sixteen thousand five hundred visitors. Another estimated forty-six thousand people attended the eighty auxiliary events planned in conjunction with the *Kimono as Art* exhibition.\(^2\) What further makes the popularity of this exhibition interesting is that Canton's Asian American population, according to the 2010 census, was only .3% out of the city's 73,007 residents (which would equal approximately 219 people).\(^3\) The 2010 population total for the Stark County area, which includes Canton, was approximately 375,586 with the Asian American population

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2 Ibid.

estimated at around .8% (which would equal approximately 3,005 people). According to a 2012 Pew Research Center study, based upon 2010 U.S. Census figures, only 294 Japanese and Japanese Americans lived in Stark County. These numbers include Asian Americans who identified as “mixed race.”

The attendance numbers were astonishing for a small town like Canton. In the statement in the epigraph, the Kimono as Art press release, and numerous articles in the local newspaper the word “celebration” is frequently used to describe the exhibition. In a city where Japanese Americans make up a small percentage of the population I wonder for whom is this “community-wide celebration”? Who were the people who were so interested in Japanese culture? And given that the population of Japanese and Japanese Americans was so small, who determined how Japanese culture was represented?

Based upon my research, I estimate that less than twenty Japanese and Japanese Americans were involved with Kimono as Art and its auxiliary events as volunteers or performers. Much of the responsibility for determining what was “authentic” or appropriate came down to one individual, Kumi Day, who was invited to join the Kimono Leadership Committee. I am interested in examining the Japanese and Japanese American participants and volunteers’ involvement with Kimono as Art and their relationship to the Kimono Leadership Committee. I am also interested in their feelings and reactions to Kimono as Art and the related events—what did the exhibition and events mean to them?

The large number of events in relation to the limited Japanese and Japanese American participants created a situation that made it impossible for the Japanese and Japanese Americans to have control over the cultural representations throughout all of the events. The lack of consistency between the representations from one event to the next and the sometimes complete lack of connection to Japanese culture, although putatively promoted as authentic Japanese cultural representations, raises the question of what were the events about?

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5 “The Rise of Asian Americans.” Pew Center for Research. http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/asianamericans-maps. It should also be noted that the Pew study states that the Asian American population for Stark County is 3,822 (out of 375,586). The Pew population numbers include Asian Americans who identified as “mixed race” for the 2010 U.S. Census.
It is important that the role of *Kimono as Art* is examined as part of the Canton revitalization efforts. ArtsinStark and the Canton Museum of Art repeatedly emphasized the economic importance of a large show like *Kimono as Art*. The city of Canton and the local arts organizations hoped to benefit from the popularity of Japanese culture with a non-Japanese audience. This popularity, which I discussed with the Japanese and Japanese American participants, was potentially based on romanticized and exoticized notions of Japanese culture. Japanese and Japanese Americans enthusiastically assisted with *Kimono as Art* and were concerned with presenting a culturally appropriate representation of Japan while emphasizing the presence of Asians and Asian Americans in the community. I argue that their participation in the *Kimono as Art* events, which featured inconsistent representations of Japanese culture and failed to distinguish Japanese Americans from Japanese, reinforced the position of Japanese Americans as "perpetual foreigners" in the Canton community.

As a biracial Korean American who grew up in and around Canton, this study is very personal to me. I saw few Asian Americans in my community while living there. I was one of three Asian American students in my middle and high schools. The other two were the children of recent immigrants and spoke very little English at the time so they were mostly invisible in our school system. As the Asian American who moved back and forth between the two groups—looking Asian, but talking "American," I was a marked target for racism.

The racism I saw and experienced growing up was blatant and cruel. Strangers would approach my Korean mother and call her a "Jap" or tell her to "go back to your homeland." I witnessed the way store clerks would talk down to her during transactions, and the way well-meaning strangers would talk louder, in simplified English usually reserved for toddlers, assuming she wouldn’t be able to understand them if they talked to her as a "normal" person. When I was with my white father, people would ask him outright if I was adopted. As I got older, the racist comments once directed at my mother were directed at me.

I became aware from a very early age that Asian Americans and their opinions were openly disregarded or seen as irrelevant by non-Asians. We rarely talked about Asia in school; if we did it was almost always in regards to World War II within the
American-centric narrative of the noble white Americans who had saved the nation from the evil Japanese. I never learned about the Japanese American internment until I was in college.

Most Canton residents at that time, during the eighties and nineties, knew very few, if any, Asian Americans and knew very little about Asia. From my personal experiences, it seemed that most people thought of Asia as a single third-world country and that all Asians coming to the U.S. were fleeing poverty and/or oppression and wanted to become American and pursue the mythical “American Dream.” As I discuss further in chapter two, during my time in Ohio, white Americans seemed to be most threatened by Asian Americans who looked Asian, but talked and acted “white,” because they did not fit the expected image of an ignorant foreigner. From personal experience, there seemed to be a backlash against the idea that a minority could not only be hierarchically on the same socio-economic level as a white American, but also possibly even surpass them. Lisa Lowe discusses this “American anxiety about Asia” in her book, Immigrant Acts, wherein she states that the stereotypes of the threatening “yellow peril” and the “model minority,” are the root of this anxiety.6 To non-Asians, Asian Americans embody both or either of these stereotypes, despite their contradictory natures. Each imagined Asian stereotype is seen as threatening to white hegemony.

I initially heard about Kimono as Art from my cousin, who worked for the Canton Museum of Art. Although living in Honolulu at the time, I immediately starting reading articles in the Canton newspaper about the exhibition and was amazed at the amount of programming and the diversity of the programming offered to complement the exhibition. The reported thousands of visitors viewing the exhibition and participating in the various events was striking. And, most amazing to me, was that it was all taking place in Canton, Ohio.

Research Methodology

My thesis project is based on an ethnographic study I conducted in Canton, Ohio, in March 2010. During this period I interviewed eight people. I also interviewed two

other people through email whom I was not able to see during my visit to Canton. These interviews formed the core of my study. I obtained information on the exhibition and auxiliary events by reading articles in local, regional, and national publications. For my analysis of the interviews, exhibition, and cultural events, I used a range of interdisciplinary materials and theoretical models from Asian American Studies, Cultural Studies, and Museum Studies sources.

In the spring of 2010, exactly one year after the *Kimono as Art* exhibition had taken place, I traveled to Canton to meet with a number of individuals who were involved with *Kimono as Art*. Having not been back to the city for several years, I was impressed by the way the downtown area had changed with newly established art galleries, cozy coffee shops that offered live musical entertainment on the weekends, and locally owned restaurants. I attended *First Friday* while I was there and witnessed the streets of downtown Canton filled with people. The crowds were large and the restaurants and bars jam-packed. It was so crowded and difficult to navigate, that I eventually gave up on making it into one of the galleries.

I met with the leaders of the two major arts organizations involved with *Kimono as Art*; M.J. Albacete, Director of the Canton Museum of Art, and Robb Hankins, CEO of ArtsinStark. ArtsinStark, a county-wide arts initiative, was responsible for marketing *Kimono as Art*, developing *KimonoFest* events, providing financial support for events created by other cultural organizations within the Cultural Center complex, and offering small grants to other cultural or educational organizations in Stark County to create *Kimono as Art* related events. The Canton Museum of Art served as the venue for the *Kimono as Art* exhibition, as well as for the *KimonoFest* events, which included Japanese tea ceremony demonstrations.

While in Canton, I sought out Japanese and Japanese American participants to discuss their roles and thoughts about *Kimono as Art*. This was challenging given that not many of them were involved and contacting them was difficult. Most importantly, I was able to get in contact with Kumi Day, who served as the Japanese “cultural

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7 ‘First Fridays’ have been adopted by a number of cities across the U.S. as a chance to highlight local artists and art galleries, usually located in a downtown location. Canton’s *First Friday* events are located in the designated ‘Arts District’ where many of the art galleries are located. Events usually include, in addition to the galleries being open later than usual, live music and dance performances on the streets and opportunities for families to participate in art making activities.
specialist" for the Kimono Leadership Committee (KLC). I was also able to contact the Sho-Jo-Ji Japanese dance troupe and several Japanese professors at local colleges via an Internet search. Day introduced me to another Japanese woman, Toshie Kenney. There were a handful of participants for whom I could not obtain contact information, or my emails and letters to them went unreturned. Fortunately, the few Japanese and Japanese Americans I interviewed happened to be the ones most actively involved in *Kimono as Art*.

Much of my information about *Kimono as Art* came from the wide press coverage. The local newspaper, the *Canton Repository*, regularly featured articles and reviews of the exhibition and auxiliary events throughout its eleven-week run. *Kimono as Art* appeared on the front page of the *Canton Repository* six times and was mentioned in at least twenty individual articles (this does not include articles about the auxiliary events). The exhibition was also featured prominently in newspapers in several nearby cities, such as the *Columbus Dispatch*, the *Akron Beacon Journal*, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, and the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*.

Multi-page spreads appeared in local and national magazines including *Northern Ohio Live*, *Ohio Magazine*, *USA Today Magazine*, *Shuttle Spindle and Dyepot* (publication of the Handweavers Guild of America), and *Artist's Magazine*. A small announcement about the exhibition appeared in the Continental Airlines inflight magazine (Continental Airlines having been one of the airlines that operated flights in and out of the Canton-Akron Airport at the time). Additionally, many small-town newspapers, city development groups, and community organizations also included information on the exhibition in their publications.

Another source of information that was especially helpful in trying to understand the physical and aesthetic spaces involved in the events, as well as providing images of the audience and participants without having visited the museum myself were the plethora of personal photographs and videos that were available through keyword searches on the Internet. ArtsinStark had a YouTube channel with several short video clips from various *KimonoFest* events. The Massillon Museum maintained a Picasa

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album that featured photographs from their *Kimono as Art*-related events. These items were invaluable in allowing me to recreate a composite picture of the *Kimono as Art* exhibition and events.

**Overview of Literature**

Historically, the relationship between American cultural institutions, like museums and art galleries, and Asians and Asian Americans has not been ideal. Museums initially grew out of European princely collections which contained numerous objects of "curiosity" and in many cases these "curiosities" came from non-European countries. Eventually, the museum model gained so much popularity that by the mid-nineteenth century nearly every Western nation had a national museum or gallery. The presence of a museum served as an indicator of a "well-furnished state," undoubtedly harkening back to the earlier princely collections, which would have served as indicators of the owner's prestige and power. Museums represented civility and those cultures without museums often became the subjects of them in other countries. With many modern museums growing out of this model we find that Asian and Asian Americans cultures and people continually were subjected to Orientalist representations in museums. Under the guise of "education about culture" with words like "phenomenal" and "blockbuster" and "celebration" thrown around, *Kimono as Art* was sold to its audiences as a once in a lifetime opportunity and likened to "seeing Japan for $10." While there have been a substantial amount of academic studies on the representation of Asian and Asian Americans in film and literature, far less has been written about their representation in museum exhibitions. With this thesis I hope to help bridge a gap between the fields of Asian American studies and museum studies. One of my primary interests in museum studies is in examining the relationships that museums forge and maintain with their communities and the way that those relationships are always in flux. Currently, many museums and cultural organizations are seeking new


ways to reach more diverse audiences, recognizing they will not be sustainable if they
only appeal to what has traditionally been the American museum’s audience in the recent
past—middle and upper middle class white Americans.

By examining the relationships between several different community groups in
Canton, I would like this study to contribute to the existing literature on museum and
communities as well as literature on the representation of cultures in a museum setting.
Leilani Nishime’s article “Communities on Display,” one of the first readings I
encountered that addresses the representation of Asian Americans (and specifically
Japanese Americans) in museums, was very influential in cultivating my desire to pursue
further research in this area. I was also greatly inspired by Robert Lavenda’s
ethnographic case study, “Festivals and Public Culture,” in Minnesota, the results of
which were published in the anthology, Museum and Communities: The Politics of Public
Culture. This article stood out for me long before I began work on this project, namely
because of the similarities I found between the small towns that Lavenda examines and
the small towns that I grew up around in the Stark County area.

By bringing Nishime’s and Lavenda’s studies together, I was able to carve out a
place for my own interests, which are both academic and personal, in analyzing the Asian
American representation in predominantly white spaces. European and American
museums have been historically codified as a “white” space in which bodies of
“otherness” are displayed for the curiosity and amusement of a “white” audience.
Within this study I also analyze the different representations of Japanese culture and the
tropes reiterated throughout the exhibition and events. It is likely that some of the
popularity of Kimono as Art could be attributed to non-Asians’ fascination with Asia in
its Orientalized, exotic manifestations. Although Albacete and others were conscious of
the potential for Japanese culture to be Orientalized by the organizers and the audience,
orientalist displays were still present throughout Kimono as Art. Lisa Lowe and many

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12 One can trace the historical background of the museum, from European royal collections (in which the
goods of conquered or colonized countries were displayed) through the 19th century “cabinet of curiosity,”
through the World’s Fairs, that displayed non-western cultures in zoo-like display, which were popular in
the late 19th and early 20th century, and understand the way in which the “Other” has continually been
displayed for the consumption of a white audience. In some ways, I see Kimono as Art as a continuation of
this lineage. Artwork by a Japanese artist, which when studied as only a piece of art, does not necessarily
contain any inherent Japanese cultural properties, is seen as a legitimate reason for hosting a “celebration of
Japanese culture” in Canton. Japanese culture is displayed for the curiosity of a white audience.
other Asian American scholars have recognized the limitations of Edward Said’s theory of Orientalism and have found it necessary to expand upon his definition.\textsuperscript{13} For the purposes of this study, I use Orientalism to refer to a specifically American Orientalism that is influenced by twentieth century American relationships with East Asia. As shown throughout the study, much of the thinking that influences the non-Asians’ relationships with the Japanese and Japanese American participants is derived from twentieth century American perceptions of Asia, as filtered through several twentieth century U.S. wars in Asia.

Asian Americans continue to be subject to Orientalization and exotification by non-Asians. This seems to particularly occur in areas where there are few Asian and Asian Americans, such as in Canton. I believe that the absence of substantial Asian and Asian American communities may allow non-Asians to create questionable images of Asian culture based upon preexisting stereotypes and assumptions. In Canton, even with advice from Japanese and Japanese American volunteers, this still occurred. This could be because the event organizers did not expect many Asian American visitors given their small numbers in the area. Furthermore, the number of Japanese and Japanese Americans volunteers was very small (less than twenty) and with the exception of Day, they were not given much control over the representation of Japanese culture.

I found museum scholar Tony Bennett’s application of Michel Foucault’s theories especially useful in analyzing the intentions for \textit{Kimono as Art}. The exhibition functioned much like nineteenth-century museums to “civilize” and “educate” the masses, here the citizens of Canton and Stark County.\textsuperscript{14} However, for the Canton Museum of Art, a dichotomy existed between the desire by the museum’s leaders to expose the community to cultures outside of their own and a reluctance to allow the very people that they believed needed to be cultured, to enter the museum space.


Description of Chapters

The first chapter provides background information on my initial interest in the *Kimono as Art* exhibition and a brief description of the economic situation in Canton that spurred an “arts revival.” I also provide an outline of the content and analyses to be contained in the subsequent chapters as well as an overview of influential literature to be used in my analyses.

The *Kimono as Art* exhibition opened at a pivotal time for the city of Canton. The second chapter of my study focuses on the city of Canton and the surrounding areas of Stark County, and the city and county’s economic problems as they shifted from a manufacturing-based economy to one that was service-based. In reaction to the losses of large manufacturing plants and along with them, hundreds of jobs, the declining population, and the reputation of the city as a depressed area, a massive revitalization project was initiated in 2003. Part of the Canton revitalization project was the promotion of arts and cultural programming in order to create new jobs and opportunities and contribute to the well being of the community.

Chapter two also looks at the relationship between the two major Canton arts organizations—ArtsinStark and the Canton Museum of Art. I met with the leaders of each of these organizations to not only talk about their respective roles in *Kimono as Art,* but also find out their visions for the city of Canton and the integration of the arts. What immediately became apparent after meeting with these two men was a rift in the Canton arts community, which could be characterized as an opposition between an older and younger generation.

What also emerged while examining the relationship between these two organizations were a number of socio-economic class issues. The older generation, which included CMA and its supporters, was clinging to an elitist notion of art as “high brow,” reflective of “high culture,” and only accessible to those educated enough to understand it. This vision of art implies that one must have a certain level of knowledge.

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15 *Forbes.com* included Canton on its list of “Most Miserable Cities,” along with a number of other Ohio cities—Cleveland, Akron, Toledo and Youngstown. Judging criteria was based upon unemployment rates, taxes, foreclosures, crimes rates, corruption of public officials, even success of professional sports teams and weather. The article and image slideshow further stated the only 18% of adults in Canton had a college degree. “America’s Most Miserable Cities.” *Forbes.com,* Feb 19, 2010; http://www.forbes.com/2010/02/11/americas-most-miserable-cities-business-beltway-miserable-cities_slide.html?partner=abcnews.
or education in order to appreciate art. However, as many museums are finding out, this attitude is not sustainable as new generations of visitors demand that museums be more accessible and less elitist. A group of individuals which included ArtsinStark and many of the young adults employed in the downtown galleries, began utilizing unorthodox approaches to making the arts appealing and inclusive to broad audiences. They faced hostility from the city cultural elites and were dismissed as “low brow,” unknowledgeable, and lacking in expertise.

Other Canton community leaders realized the city had become too dependent on the manufacturing industry and sought new ways to create jobs and revitalize the local economy. They looked to the arts to develop more arts programming which could help create new jobs, provide new cultural experiences for the community, and assist Canton gain relevance in an increasingly globalized world. Canton community leaders would have to guide residents in becoming global citizens in order for Canton to move away from the manufacturing industry. As part of this economic revival, they had to work on “refining” and “culturing” the blue-collar majority that resided in the city.

My main interest in this chapter is looking at the function of Kimono as Art in the midst of Canton’s revitalization efforts. Kimono as Art was an experiment of sorts for the community leaders and arts organizations in Canton. Despite any differences the arts organizations might have had with one another, they were able to organize an impressive amount of programming to accompany the exhibition. As a result of their collaborative efforts, Kimono as Art was the most well attended exhibition in the history of the Canton Museum of Art. It also showed the more skeptical Canton community leaders that the local community would respond to and would attend arts and cultural events.

In the chapter three I look at a selection of “cultural” events affiliated with Kimono as Art and analyze the representations of Japanese culture and relevancies to the KimonoFest mission of educating visitors about Japanese cultural traditions. I include the background behind the Kimono as Art exhibition and the decision, made by the prominent Timken family, to bring the exhibition to Canton. I also provide a short biography of the kimono artist, Itchiku Kubota, and describe his work with tsujigahana, a nearly forgotten method of Japanese fabric dying, which Kubota relentlessly studied and was able to recreate using his own contemporary methods.
An overview of the *Kimono as Art* exhibition installation in Canton follows along with an analysis of selected auxiliary events which I subdivide into three categories: *KimonoFest*, which focused on performances, demonstrations and workshops on Japanese cultural practices and were developed by the Kimono Leadership Committee; affiliated events that were created by cultural organizations under the umbrella of ArtsinStark and were sponsored by this organization; and “unofficial” events that were created by cultural and educational organizations outside of ArtsinStark. These auxiliary events varied widely in subject matter and content. Some of the events I looked at were a Canton Ballet performance created by Japanese American choreographer, a sumo demonstration at the Canton Civic Center, the opera *Madame Butterfly* presented by the Canton Symphony, and a performance of *The Mikado* by the Kent State University Stark County Campus.

In my analysis of the selected events, I examine the different manifestations of “performing Japanese-ness” presented during *Kimono as Art*. Further, I examine the use of “yellowface” by white Americans in performances that were supposedly reflective of Japanese culture. I also begin to look at the role of the Japanese and Japanese American volunteers and participants in the development of the events. Lastly, I return to looking at ArtsinStark and the Canton Museum of Art and the politics that were involved during the development of the *Kimono as Art* event programming. Socio-cultural politics between the two organizations at times determined what events were to be included. My concern is not only with the problematic representations of Japanese culture, but also with who was responsible for determining what “Japanese cultural” events were affiliated with *Kimono as Art*. Whose voice was being heard throughout *Kimono as Art*?

Chapter four focuses on the Japanese and Japanese American participants of *Kimono as Art* whom I interviewed. I found that these women (all of the Japanese and Japanese American volunteers that I am aware of were women) could be divided into two distinct groups. The first group of women came to the U.S. from Japan and had lived in Ohio for at least a decade or more, either to attend college or because they had American husbands. All of the women were married to white men, and except for one woman, all were citizens of Japan and identified as “Japanese," even the one who was an American citizen. Interestingly enough, they were careful to distinguish themselves from the
Japanese nationals who worked in Ohio on temporary assignments. They all admitted that they did not feel “really Japanese,” but would not call themselves “Japanese American” either. The second group was made up of Nisei and Sansei Japanese American women from Cleveland, who belonged to the Sho-Jo-Ji Japanese dance troupe.

I talked to the women about their experiences as Japanese and Japanese Americans in Ohio, their participation in the *Kimono as Art* events, and their feelings and reactions to the content of the events. In this chapter, I also address a number of issues that arose in *Kimono as Art* – the misidentification of Japanese Americans as Japanese nationals, Orientalist constructions of Japanese culture, “autoexoticizing” by Japanese and Japanese Americans, the replication of common gendered tropes assigned to Asians/Asian Americans, racial cross-dressing, and the conflation of different Asian cultures.

In chapter five I analyze the intersection of *Kimono as Art*, the cultural and economic revival in Canton, and the position of Japanese and Japanese Americans in the city. In their quest for “culture,” the Kimono Leadership Committee utilized Japanese and Japanese Americans to teach white Americans about Japanese culture. Christina Klein points out that in 1990’s “Asian Americans were seen as bestowing upon the nation a set of culturally specific ties and skills that could help the U.S. extend its reach deeper into Asian . . .” In this same regard, Asian Americans were seen as possessing knowledge that the white audience in Canton could benefit from learning. *Kimono as Art* became a tool for “culturing” the working and middle class inhabitants of Canton. At the same time, educating these groups about Japanese culture was a way for Canton to appear cosmopolitan and open to cultural diversity. However, the specificity of Japanese American culture and presence of Japanese Americans within the community were overlooked. Japanese Americans were not understood as “Americans” or even “Japanese Americans” but rather mistaken as “Japanese” (nationals). As Lisa Lowe points out “… the American of Asian descent remains the symbolic ‘alien’ the metonym for Asia who by definition cannot be imaged as sharing in America.”

In Canton, Asians were subjected to a “white gaze” and became objects of curiosity. At times, little thought was given to the reactions of the Japanese American/Asian American communities towards the content of some of the events. When Japanese and Japanese American participants did make suggestions they were often rejected, ignored, or questioned. KLC members were reluctant to relinquish their idea of how they wanted to see Japanese culture presented—an idea of Japan that was based on Orientalist imagery and pastoral romanticism.

The *Kimono as Art* exhibition and its auxiliary events proposed to educate the people of Canton about Japanese culture. However, it also alienated Asian Americans from the majority of the Canton community by perpetuating Orientalist themes that rendered them as “the Other” and place them on the periphery of mainstream American culture.

The complexity of overlapping relationships in Canton between the Japanese and Japanese Americans; between the ArtsinStark and the Canton Museum of Art; between working, lower middle class, and the upper middle class audiences; and between the Japanese/Japanese Americans and the Kimono Leadership Committee—provided an interesting case study on how museums and cultural institutions navigate the terrain of diversity. *Kimono as Art* was successful in attracting visitors who did not normally visit museums. But I wonder, did it offer appropriate cultural experiences of Japanese culture to the community of Canton and Stark County?
CHAPTER TWO
THE CANTON CULTURAL REVIVAL

"What this can do for Canton is show that we are capable of bringing in large shows. Economically, it means bringing people into town who will spend money here."

It may seem unusual that a midwestern city with a small Asian and Asian American population would be named after the antiquated name of a city in China. Likewise, many people were surprised that a place where few people were familiar with Japanese art would host an exhibition of artwork by the famed Japanese artist, Itchiku Kubota. Canton, Ohio is not particularly known as an arts and cultural center or for having substantial Asian or Asian American communities. So how did the 2009 exhibition, *Kimono as Art: The Landscapes of Itchiku Kubota*, end up in Canton and become the largest and most popular show ever hosted by the Canton Museum of Art?

Agriculture and the manufacturing industry have historically been the driving forces behind Canton’s economy. As the global economic landscape changed, however, many small and moderate sized cities across the Midwest could no longer rely on these industries and began seeking new ways to create jobs and revitalize their communities.

In this chapter, I give a brief history of the city of Canton and look at how the decline of its historic businesses affected its communities and forced its leaders to embark on a major revitalization effort that has been underway for more than a decade. I then examine the local arts organizations that became active agents in this revitalization process and the different ways they promoted the arts. As Canton moved away from an industrial economy to a service economy, these organizations sought to promote the arts as a resource offering increased educational and employment opportunities and improving the quality of life for its citizens. I then discuss how the blockbuster

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1 Kimberly Kenney, *Canton: A Journey Through Time* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2003) 12. Canton founder, Bezaleel Wells, came to the area from Baltimore, which was a busy harbor at the time. Wells greatly admired Baltimore-based trader, John O’Donnell, who became very successful through trade with Asia. O’Donnell purchased a plantation which he named “The Canton Estate” since his first shipment of cargo had come from Canton, China. Wells decided to name the city “Canton” to commemorate O’Donnell after his death.

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exhibition, *Kimono as Art: The Landscapes of Itchiku Kubota* was an integral part of this "arts revival."

I will focus on two major arts organizations that have been the prominent advocates of the arts in Canton: ArtsinStark and the Canton Museum of Art (CMA). *Kimono as Art* served as the first major collaborative effort between multiple arts and cultural organizations in Canton. I do not think that it is a coincidence that *Kimono as Art*, the first and only exhibition to showcase Asian art and culture in Canton, became the most successful exhibition ever hosted by the Canton Museum of Art. The enthusiastic reception to *Kimono as Art* by a predominantly white audience raises a number of questions regarding the presentation of exoticized representations and the commodification of Japanese culture, which I will begin to explore in this chapter. And finally, I debate the oft-used description of *Kimono as Art* and its auxiliary events as a "celebration of Japanese culture." In a town where a small minority of Japanese and Japanese American live, what is really being celebrated here? And who is celebrating?

**Canton, Ohio**

Canton serves as the county seat for Stark County, which is located approximately fifty miles south of Cleveland. Canton and the adjacent city of North Canton function as the economic centers of the county. The area outside of these two cities consists of small suburban cities, towns, and farmlands. Given that these smaller cities and townships in Stark County lack commercial centers and large cultural organizations, residents of these areas travel to Canton, North Canton or Massillon for cultural experiences. Although many of the people do not live within the Canton city limits, they make up a significant, if not the largest portion of the people who support Canton’s cultural institutions and businesses. One might assume that a large number of visitors to the *Kimono as Art* exhibition were from these areas outside of the city limits. Also, it should be pointed out that not all the Japanese cultural events took place exclusively in Canton as there were affiliated events held in North Canton and Massillon. The people, who live in these

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2 The Pew Research Center 2012 Asian American Study indicated that there are (as of the 2010 U.S. Census) 294 people of Japanese descent living in Stark County out of a total county population of 375,586. This number also includes those of mixed race. "Asian American Population Map," The Pew Research Center [website], 2012, www.pewsocialtrends.org/asianamericans-maps/
adjacent areas, although not residents within the official city limits, are still dependent on the goods and services provided in the city. Hence, when arts organization leaders in Canton refer to "community" they implicitly include those residents outside of the city limits. My references to the "community" in Canton therefore include the residents of the larger area outside of it.

History of Canton

Historically, the city of Canton became a major center for industry because of its location and proximity to major canals, railroads, and highways. A section of the Ohio & Erie Canal opened in the nearby town of Massillon in 1828, and connected Stark County to Cleveland. Although Canton was not situated directly on the canal, the waterway was profitable for the city and surrounding area and contributed to the growth of its population and manufacturing industries. In fact, around the turn of the century, Canton adopted the moniker of "the City of Diversified Industries," for being home to a large number of different businesses.

Over the early part of the twentieth century, the manufacturing industry in Canton grew and the city's residential population increased substantially. The population eventually peaked in 1950 when 116,912 people lived within the city limits. Since then, the population has steadily declined. What is unsettling for community leaders in Canton is that people are not just moving from the city to the immediate surrounding areas. Population statistics show a steady decline of the entire Stark county population since the fifties, a trend that has been projected to continue in the future.

This population decline is attributed to a number of factors. Kimberly Kenney, in her history of Canton, speculates that the increased availability of automobiles and simultaneous urban development had a negative effect on the city's population. More cars and better roads meant people could live further away from their jobs and further away from the city. With the disbursement of the population from Canton into adjacent

3 The city of Canton was incorporated in 1822.
4 Kenney, Canton, 22.
5 Ibid. 51.
6 "City Statistics," City of Canton [website], http://cantonohio.gov/?pg=citystats
7 "Overview of Economic Conditions," Downtown Development Master Plan 2003, Canton, Ohio, B-3
areas, the main commercial center in Stark County shifted outside the city limits to North Canton.

Kenney also points out that the shift from an industrial economy to a service-oriented one during the later half of the 20th century affected the dispersal of the population. The relocation of many manufacturing plants and jobs to foreign countries, because of cheaper labor and lower overhead costs, contributed to the loss of a large number of industrial-based jobs in Canton. The closure of several large companies and manufacturing plants led to a high unemployment rate and a migration of the city's residents to areas outside of the city and/or county in search of jobs. As more residents moved out of the city and those still within it traveled to new commercial centers in neighboring cities, many of the restaurants, shops and retail businesses located in downtown Canton either closed or relocated. By the 1980's, there was little reason for anyone to visit downtown Canton as only a few shops and restaurants remained. By the 1980's and 90's downtown Canton had a reputation for being crime-ridden and unsafe.

Despite the loss of a number of major manufacturing plants in the last decade, large industrial companies continued to be the largest employers in Canton. However, there was (and is) always the fear that at any moment the remaining plants could either shut down or layoff employees. Canton community leaders and the Chamber of Commerce understood that there was a need to work on the revitalization of the city and create new job opportunities for residents in order to retain residents and stimulate the local economy. In the last fifteen years a group of Canton community leaders began developing different strategies to address the economic problems of the city.

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8 Kenney, *Canton*, 145.
One of the first steps in this process was the creation of a preliminary plan that included the designation of a Downtown Canton Special Improvement District in 1997. The Special Improvement District (SID) was an area specifically selected for revitalization and encompassed a large portion of the downtown area. Within SID, a historic district was established. The Canton Historic District, which was recognized and added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2006, comprised approximately thirty-four city blocks emanating around Public Square in downtown Canton. Within the Historic District, nine buildings were listed in the National Register of Historic Places, along with over fifty historic buildings or properties not formally designated as historic places.\footnote{Canton Historic District National Register of Historic Places proposal, 2006.}

The Canton Development Partnership (CDP) group was formed in the year 2000, by the Canton Chamber of Commerce to bring private and public sectors together to jointly focus on the revitalization of the downtown area.\footnote{“Ten-Year Transformation,” Canton Development Partnership [website], http://www.cantondevelopmentpartnership.com.} The group was made up of a number of organizations including the City of Canton, Canton Regional Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Canton Land Bank, Canton Tomorrow, Inc. and the Downtown Canton Special Improvement District. The CDP published a detailed master plan in 2003, with four main goals and a number of revitalization strategies and projects for the city of Canton.\footnote{“Goals and strategies,” Downtown Development Master Plan 2003.}

Many of the projects outlined in the 2003 master plan have come to fruition—a weekly farmer’s market is now held in the summer and early fall, a community garden and new sidewalks and streetscapes have been installed, green spaces have been created, way-finding signs have been put up throughout the city, and banners were erected promoting local civic and cultural organizations.\footnote{Special Improvement District Annual Report 2009, Canton, Ohio.} In just a decade, there have been many visible changes to downtown Canton.

Of particular interest in the 2003 Master Plan were descriptions of several art-based revitalization projects. The group in charge of managing these initiatives was ArtsinStark. The CDP along with ArtsinStark encouraged artists to move into the downtown area and open up galleries and studios. Where previously there was just one
gallery and no artists’ studios, there are now five art galleries and twenty-two artist studios in a specially designated "Arts District."\(^{15}\)

Another key project in the proposed plan, which has yet to actualize, was the promotion of a designated area of Canton as the “Cultural Corridor.” The area would be based on Market Avenue, one of the main thoroughfares through the city, off of which several museums and cultural institutions are located.\(^{16}\) The city also hopes to add another museum and art galleries along Market Avenue in the future.\(^{17}\) Visitors would then be encouraged to walk the strip of Market Avenue stopping at the various cultural venues along the way.

A public art program, suggested in the Master Plan, has been successfully implemented since 2003. Over forty works of public art were installed around the city in the form of large sculptures or murals painted on the facades of downtown buildings (Figures 2.3 & 2.4). The presence of art in the city has significantly increased. The implementation of these art-based initiatives can be largely attributed to the aggressive fundraising campaigns and the creation of inclusive art initiatives by ArtsinStark.

**ArtsinStark**

ArtsinStark is a non-profit arts organization, formed in Canton in 1968, which owns and operates the Canton Cultural Center for the Arts. The Cultural Center for the Arts is a large structure located on the edge of downtown that houses the Canton Museum of Art, Canton Ballet, Voices of Canton (VOCI), Players Guild Theater, and the Canton Symphony. Annually, ArtsinStark provides funding for these five organizations as well as the Canton Palace Theatre and the Massillon Museum of Art.\(^{18}\) The major benefactor of this relationship is the Canton Museum of Art. At the time of the *Kimono as Art*

\(^{15}\)Canton Arts District [website], http://www.cantonartsdistrict.com.

\(^{16}\)Downtown Development Master Plan 2003. The cultural institutions currently located along this strip of Market Avenue include the Cultural Center, the First Ladies Museum and Library, the Palace Theater, the Classic Car Museum.

\(^{17}\)Ibid. 7-8.

\(^{18}\)The Massillon Museum of Art is located in the adjacent city of Massillon. Several *Kimono as Art* affiliated events were held there including the Midori Fashion Show and the Club New Fukasuki event.
exhibition in 2008, the museum received approximately 20% of its operating budget from ArtsinStark, more than any of the other cultural organizations supported by ArtsinStark.19

ArtsinStark was and still is the major grant funding organization for Stark County arts and cultural organizations, as well as for individual artists and educators. Impressively, ArtsinStark raises nearly 99% of its current $2.6 million annual budget from individuals, businesses, corporate donations, and their Annual Arts Campaign.20 The organization receives no government support. Eighty-percent of the money raised is distributed via two types of grants. Over $1 million is designated as “Operating Grants,” and distributed to the seven major Canton arts and cultural organizations previously mentioned. Approximately $200,000 is allocated annually for “Special Project Grants” that are further broken down into “Innovative Grants” for artists and other non-profit organizations and “SmArts Grants” for educators and schools.21

In the three years leading up to Kimono as Art, ArtsinStark had risen to prominence within the local community and the Canton arts scene had grown under the guidance of its CEO Robb Hankins. Hankins, who was hired by ArtsinStark in 2005, re-energized the organization and became a driving force behind ArtsinStark’s involvement in the downtown revitalization. More businessman than arts person, Hankins made a career out of moving into small, economically struggling towns and revitalizing their lagging economies through funding campaigns that introduced a variety of arts and cultural experiences into the community.

ArtsinStark and the Canton Museum of Art established a working relationship by collaborating on public programming. They were able to do this despite the fact that the leadership of each of these organizations had different opinions on what qualified as “art” and how it should be promoted. In my interviews with representatives from both organizations, it became evident that the leaders and staff of these organizations were

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19 “Operating Grants,” ArtsinStark [website], http://www.artsinstark.com/Operating_Grants.html. As of 2012, the Canton Symphony now receives the largest portion of the Operating Grant from ArtsinStark ($312,000 of their $1.2 million budget). Prior to 2012, the Canton Museum of Art was the largest beneficiary of the Operating Grants annual receiving approximately $200,000 of their $1 million budget from ArtsinStark. As the Symphony’s operating costs have grown they have begun to receive more funding from ArtsinStark, while CMA’s has remained steady at $1 million for the past couple years - with the exception of 2008 while in preparation for Kimono as Art.
20 ArtsinStark Fact Sheet, ArtsinStark, Canton, Ohio, Feb 2012.
highly critical of each other. It seemed that many people within the local art community viewed Hankins with suspicion. Prior to Hankins’ arrival in Canton in 2005, he worked in Eugene, Oregon, as the city’s cultural services director for two years. During that time he engaged in a similar arts revival in Eugene as he did in Canton. Hankins advised the Eugene City Council to adopt a slogan for a marketing campaign touting Eugene as “The World’s Greatest City for the Arts and Outdoors.” While the slogan was adopted by the city council in a unanimous vote, other residents within the community were not pleased with it. When Hankins left Eugene for Canton the following year, leaders of arts organizations in Eugene began to speak out, calling the slogan “ludicrous,” “embarrassing,” and even “silly” because of its overreaching proclamation. They subsequently changed their slogan to “A Great City for the Arts and Outdoors.”

Thus far, Hankins has repeated a similar process of using the arts to revitalize sagging economies in ten cities across the U.S. In the case of Eugene, community leaders felt hoodwinked by Hankins who had remained in his position for only two years and within that time persuaded them to adopt a questionable slogan and then quickly left. Eugene residents were suspicious of Hankins, with one news article pointing out that he was “relatively new to Eugene” when Hankins revealed his vision for the city. In a 1998 interview after his resignation from the Greater Hartford Arts Council in Connecticut, Hankins referred to his departure at the time as a strategic move—a “firing” of himself. At the time of the 1998 interview, he stated that he had done this five times before to allow “new energy” to come in and take over.

The formula Hankins introduced has been successful in Canton—at least for the short-term. Hankins encouraged ArtsinStark to utilize widespread marketing campaigns and seek out unusual collaborators to appeal to a broader audience. Since Hankins’ arrival at ArtsinStark, there has been a significant growth in the number of art galleries, studios, public art, and art events in Canton. What remains to be seen is whether the arts

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scene in Canton can continue to grow or remain sustainable in its current manifestation—especially if Hankins decides to leave for another city in need of someone to organize an “arts revival.”

The First Friday gallery walk events in downtown Canton, which were introduced by Hankins, were and continue to be embraced by many in the community—including those people who were unlikely to set foot inside a museum or gallery beforehand. However, these monthly “art” events eventually became very popular with young people, who often ended up spending more time in the bars than in the galleries. Yet, for a city that has had little community activity in its downtown area for the past several decades, to have throngs of people filling the streets downtown was encouraging. For the people interested in the arts, the galleries were open and there were usually bands and performers in the streets. While art was not always the focus for many of the attendees, “First Friday” succeeded in bringing people to downtown Canton and increased business for local restaurants, bars, and shops.

One public art project that Hankins proposed was the commission of large-scale works of art based on important moments in professional football. Hankins envisioned the Professional Football Hall of Fame, which was the city’s biggest tourist attraction, as an ideal partner for promoting the arts in Canton. As of 2013, the project has been officially slated to move forward. However, there was and still is a strong divide between those involved in the arts organizations in Canton and those involved with the Football Hall of Fame. During our interview, Canton Museum of Art director, M.J. Albacete, expressed discontent with the Chamber of Commerce and their reliance on the popularity of the Football Hall of Fame to promote economic development.

Albacete, a self-admitted “art snob,” was highly critical of the work of ArtsinStark. He dismissed First Friday as a questionable art experience and called most of the downtown galleries “second or third rate” and the local artists represented in the galleries, “wanna-be artists.” Albacete expressed a desire to do more for the arts by focusing on bringing in more large-scale exhibitions like Kimono as Art. However, he

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27 M.J. Albacete, Director, Canton Museum of Art, Interview with author, Canton, Ohio, March 25, 2010.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid.
lamented that the funding to support such exhibitions was not available and that it was hard to get buy-in from other organizations. Albacete viewed the ArtsinStark events as superficial and not really of benefit to the community. While Hankins' primary focus was serving the local community and constructing events that would appeal to a large majority, Albacete believed that they needed to draw in visitors from outside of the city and county with large exhibitions like *Kimono as Art.*

Canton Museum of Art

The Canton Museum of Art (CMA) is the oldest arts organization in Canton, dating back to 1935. The museum is a small institution with no more than ten or twelve people on staff at any given time. The museum maintains a permanent collection of mainly 19th and 20th century American artwork specifically focused on watercolors and ceramics. They also have a substantial collection of art by Ohio artists. The museum is housed in the Cultural Center for the Arts.

The museum has no permanent gallery installations and offers a variety of exhibitions each year. The exhibitions vary in content—for example, in the past three years they have included an exhibition of art made from recycled materials by artists from the “rustbelt” areas of the Midwest, an exhibition of watercolors by many well-known American artists, and an exhibition of handbags from the twentieth century. It also regularly features the annual Canton National Art Show, a juried exhibition of artwork from artists across the U.S., and the Stark County High School Art Exhibition, a juried exhibition for Stark County high school students. The museum also offers art classes for adults and children.

With the exception of *Kimono as Art,* the exhibitions at CMA were conventionally installed—paintings on white walls and small sculptures on pedestals. Thematically, the exhibitions focused on simple, non-challenging ideas and concepts—for example, previous exhibitions included an exhibition of animals in art and an exhibition of portraits. Generally, there was no exploration of complex conceptual themes or ideas. One may conclude that the leadership was uninterested in developing

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exhibitions and programming that could have functioned more meaningfully for the community.

Through my interviews and discussions, it was clear that the leadership of CMA and other local arts organizations believed a large portion of Canton residents to be "deficient" and lacking in cultural knowledge. Albacete stated, "It bothers me that a lot of the activities available in our community now are very superficial . . . [it seems] that some of the leadership [think] that all they have to do is demonstrate how much "fun" art is . . . I think of art as a very deep lake whereas some people think of it as a superficial puddle." Albacete later went on to state that some of leaders in the community "don’t know the arts at all and there’s a consequence there, they’re inadequate." Albacete sometimes spoke dismissively about the museum’s potential visitors in my interview with him. There was a dichotomy in the fact that Albacete seemed to reject a large portion of the working class and lower middle class members of the community because they did not consistently support the museum. Yet, it may be that the working and lower middle class members of the community did not support the museum because the programming did not resonate with them or offer opportunities for meaningful engagement. When the CMA utilized the word “community” in its rhetoric, it was not

The modernist museum . . . understood its visitors as deficient. They were those who were in search of something they did not have, who lacked information, who were in need of instruction and who were intended to act as receivers of knowledge, empty vessels to be filled.

Albacete sometimes spoke dismissively about the museum’s potential visitors in my interview with him. There was a dichotomy in the fact that Albacete seemed to reject a large portion of the working class and lower middle class members of the community because they did not consistently support the museum. Yet, it may be that the working and lower middle class members of the community did not support the museum because the programming did not resonate with them or offer opportunities for meaningful engagement. When the CMA utilized the word “community” in its rhetoric, it was not

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31 Ibid.
32 Ibid. In this portion of the interview, Albacete is discussing his dissatisfaction with the arts scene in Canton. He specifically refers to other community leaders in Canton in this quote, but many of his other comments alluded to the fact that he also felt this way about others in the community. He complained about community leaders, “giving into the locals,” by creating events that local residents enjoyed and attended, such as First Friday, which Albacete did not think was a valuable addition to Canton arts programming.
necessarily in an inclusive sense. There was a very specific group that the CMA envisioned as its ideal audience. Furthermore, it seemed that some community leaders and cultural arts organization leaders wished to distance themselves from the city's blue-collar reputation by acting as the authorities and arbiters of cultural knowledge in the city.

In Birth of the Museum, Tony Bennett pointed out that museums have been appropriated by the upper class and have “continued to play a significant role in differentiating elite from popular social classes.” Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu explained museums were sites where those who visited could accrue “cultural capital.” Bourdieu likened “cultural capital” to economic or social capital as something that could be gained, exchanged, and given status. He argued that museums were “almost exclusively the domain of the cultivated classes.” Bennett, in his analysis of Pierre Bourdieu and Alain Darbel’s study The Love of Art, reiterates that the “cultivated classes” were often “hostile to such attempts to make art more accessible.” He goes on to explain that Bordieu and Darbel argue:

...this is because such pedagogic props detract from that charismatic ideology which, in making “an encounter with a work of art the occasion of a decent of grace (charisma), provides the privileged with the most ‘indisputable’ justification for their cultural privilege. . .”

Albacete was very critical of the work that ArtsinStark was doing in trying to make art more accessible to the community. While some of the arts leadership in Canton envisioned themselves as the “social elite,” it was perhaps their preoccupation with the maintenance of their elite status that prevented their support of a more dynamic and democratic museum that would appeal to all sectors of the Canton population.

34 Ibid. 28.
36 Ibid.
38 Ibid.
Kimono as Art and Canton’s Cultural Revival

The *Kimono as Art* planning committee, known formally as the Kimono Leadership Committee (KLC), was headed by five prominent individuals in Canton: M. J. Albacete, Director of the CMA; Robb Hankins, CEO of ArtsinStark; Jane Timken, daughter of the Jack and Joy Timken (the couple who visited the Itchiku Kubota Museum in Japan and decided they wanted to bring the artwork from this museum to Canton); Heather Fisher of the prominent Fisher family (owners of the Fisher Foods local supermarket chain); and Carol Savastano, an active community volunteer. What all these people had in common was that they were white and upper middle class.

It should be noted here that many of the residents in Canton were employed in the manufacturing industry. In fact, the Timken Company, whose non-profit organization (The Timken Foundation) helped fund the *Kimono as Art* exhibition, was one of the largest employers in Canton.\(^{39}\) According to U.S. Census figures released in 2009, Canton had the largest percentage of families in Ohio whose earned incomes were far below the federal poverty line.\(^{40}\) This evidence suggests that a large percentage of Canton residents could be considered “working class.” As Jefferson Cowie and Lauren Boehm point out in their brief overview of the evolution of the working class in America, since the 1980’s “working class” has taken on negative connotations.\(^{41}\) It is clear that some of the leadership in Canton have absorbed these negative connotations of the

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working class in Canton. The "masses" were believed to be uncultured and unsophisticated.

For the Canton Museum of Art, the goal of the *Kimono as Art* exhibition and the *KimonoFEST* events was to expose the "uncultured" people of Canton to Japanese culture in an attempt to "culture" them. This recalls Bennett's discussion of the development of the exhibitionary complex in early museums in the mid to late nineteenth century and its function as an instrument of regulation for the working class. In this ideal museum space, the working class and middle class would mingle together so that the working class could study and mimic the behavioral practices of the middle class. At the Canton Museum of Art, its leadership intended to educate and "culture" local visitors through *Kimono as Art*.

In order to execute this "celebration of Japanese culture," CMA recruited Japanese and Japanese American residents to share their knowledge. However, their participation had to fit within a specific vision designed by the non-Japanese organizers. This is not to say that the Japanese volunteers were completely without agency. They had opportunities to make recommendations and reject proposed ideas when necessary, as will be evident in subsequent chapters. But I am still interested in asking the question, for whom was this celebration? It was certainly not for the Japanese and Japanese American communities since there was not a substantial number of them present and no sense of a cohesive community among the Japanese or Japanese Americans living in Canton. The arts organizations emphasized that the celebration was for "the community." But what was this community celebrating and why?

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42 Bennett, *Birth of the Museum*, 73.
Looking comparatively at Robert Lavenda’s ethnography of the Water Carnival in Hutchinson, Minnesota, I find many similarities between the structure and organization of the Water Carnival and the structure and organization of KimonoFest and other events included in the “celebration of Japanese culture” that were offered to support Kimono as Art. In Lavenda’s study, a particular group (the Jaycees), made up of mostly white collar and upper middle class, white, male residents, acted as a voice for the larger community, dictating community needs while representing their efforts to organize the carnival as a service to the entire community. The Jaycees carefully organized the carnival events to service the upper middle class. Hence, the financial elites held meetings in exclusive places, such as the county club, where non-elites would feel unwelcome. Lavenda explains that the organizers were “alienated from and alienating to those segments of the city that are not their own.”43 Lavenda goes on to explain that he believes the Jaycees were essentially “intensifying their own sense of community, rewarding themselves for a job well done” while they purportedly developed events meant as celebrations for the larger community.

I found that there were many similarities between the Jaycees’ attitudes in Lavenda’s study and actions and attitudes of some of the arts leadership in Canton. While I am not clear what the KLC had in mind when they spoke of Kimono as Art as a “celebration,” it appeared that many of the “celebratory” types of events were created for the leaders, administrators, and acquaintances of the Canton arts and cultural organizations, rather than a celebration for the larger community. The “celebrations” that were organized by the KLC, such as the “Essence of Japan” Kick-off party and the

Kimono as Art opening gala, charged pricey admission fees, limited the number of attendees, and were advertised as formal events. While all these stipulations may have been required in order to host successful events, they also limited the participation to those who could afford to attend the events. Thus the celebratory events were catered to a specific audience and appeared to be created by the KLC to, in essence, “reward themselves for a job well done,” much like the Jaycees had done at the Water Carnival in Lavenda’s study. Kimono as Art was not only the culmination of many years spent revitalizing the city of Canton through the arts, but also an affirmation for the city’s leadership that they were providing “the community” with meaningful art experiences and simultaneously reaffirming their status as the cultural elite who knew what was best for everyone.

Lavenda quoting Abner Cohen notes, “carnivals are irreducible cultural forms, but like all other cultural forms are seldom free of political significance.” The arts revival in Canton highlighted class politics. From Hankins’ point of view, it was intended to dissolve the lines between the working class and upper middle class by bringing them together in order to attract a large audience, yet it in some instances it magnified the differences between these two groups. There were events that appealed to mainly the working class and lower middle class, such as First Friday, that the upper middle class tended to avoid. Likewise, there were art events that the upper middle class attended, which excluded those who were working or lower middle class. The Canton Museum of Art created exhibitions that in theory were supposed to be open to all visitors, but often there was an idealized viewer in mind, specifically white and upper middle class.

44 Ibid. 101
In this discussion, it might be useful to refer to Gramsci’s notion of hegemony—that a dominant group gains power through the consent of subordinate group(s). Gramsci’s idea of hegemony is a complex process of negotiation and practices through which the dominant group surreptitiously gains power. Using Gramsci’s distinction between political society (ruled by force) and civil society (organized through consent), Ivan Karp explains that the institutions of civil society, like museums and cultural centers, exercise hegemony “through the production of cultural and moral systems that legitimate the existing social order.” In Canton, the arts leadership routinely emphasized their commitment to the well being of the community by offering arts programs and auxiliary activities. While they were purportedly well intentioned, they also clearly emphasized that they knew what was best for the people of the community far better than the people knew what they needed themselves.

Art historian, Carol Duncan explains that museums as “public institutions made (and still make) the state look good: progressive, concerned about the spiritual life of its citizens, a preserver of past achievements and a provider for the common good.” Duncan goes onto explain that the museum can “give(s) citizenship and civic virtue a content without having to redistribute real power.” In the case of *Kimono as Art*, although the organizers wanted to appeal to a wide audience they did not allow this larger audience a voice in the development of the exhibition and arts programs. Hence, non-elite visitors were not welcomed as partners. They were recipients of knowledge

48 Ibid. 94.
determined by the dominant arts group – the upper middle class in Canton. In *Kimono as Art*, a foreign culture was presented through the vision of the dominant social and economic group. Thus the subordinate groups, while recognized as members of the community, could only gain knowledge about what has been deemed appropriate for them to learn by the dominant group. In this way, we might conclude that under the guise of community service, the carefully constructed dissemination of aesthetic knowledge in Canton delegated power to the dominant group without the awareness of the subordinate group(s).

In the first part of this chapter I included a brief economic history of Canton, including its financial decline and the development of revitalization efforts because I believe an understanding of this history can help us to understand *Kimono as Art* as part of a larger exhibitionary enterprise. At the time, *Kimono as Art* and its auxiliary events were the culmination of the arts revival effort in Canton resulting in the most expensive, most popular art event ever presented in the city and facilitated through the collaboration of multiple organizations. I initially thought *Kimono as Art* functioned primarily as a vehicle in which the predominantly white audience reaffirmed their dominant position over Asian and Asian Americans through the display and exotification of Japanese people and culture. However, I found that *Kimono as Art* simultaneously functioned as a way for the upper middle class organizers to reaffirm their hierarchical status over the non-Asian working and lower middle class groups in Canton.

Hankins wanted to reach out to all groups, including the working and lower middle classes, by developing activities that would be more appealing to them. Hence, through ArtsinStark he developed events that were less "stuffy" and free from pretention
and took place outside of the museum building. Albacete and CMA supporters saw these sorts of events as superficial. It seemed as though Albacete did not understand why the museum did not attract a large audience. He viewed it as a “flaw” in the people, rather than anything the museum was or was not doing. If he was aware of it, he was reluctant to change things at the museum in order to attract diverse sectors of the population and make them feel more welcomed.

The hegemonic relationship between the white working and middle classes and Japanese and Japanese American groups was more complicated. In her discussion of Gramsci’s notion of hegemony, Lisa Lowe explains “the hegemony of a specific group over a series of subordinate groups is never stable or static.”\(^49\) These relationships are constantly in flux. Most Japanese and Japanese American participants were part of the middle/upper middle class as most of the participants and volunteers were educated Japanese woman married to white men. So they were members of a class group that was ranked above working and lower middle class groups. The “social elite” engaged Japanese and Japanese Americans to share their cultural knowledge with everyone, including the working and lower middle classes in Canton. These Japanese and Japanese American “performers” were also valuable to the fulfillment of the organizers’ goals. They were permitted to enter the spaces that the working and lower middle classes could not enter, such as the “Kick-off party” and Opening Gala, yet they did so only at the invitation of the dominant group.

Yet, Japanese and Japanese American were subjected to the “gaze” of all visitors, including both the working classes and upper middle classes. I believe the inclusion of displays that highlighted “Japanese-ness” or the “foreignness” of Japanese culture,\(^49\) Lowe, Critical Terrains, 17.
however accurate or inaccurate, potentially further "orientalized" Japanese culture in the minds of a predominantly white audience. The showcasing of "traditional Japanese culture" as a curiosity though performances by Japanese and Japanese Americans potentially enforced the idea that Japanese Americans (and possibly other Asian Americans) were perpetual foreigners even when their ancestors have lived in the U.S. for multiple generations.\(^{50}\)

By examining the complexity of the relationships between the different social groups and socio-economic classes in Canton, we can begin to understand how *Kimono as Art* functioned on multiple levels—educating visitors about Japanese culture while confirming the authority of Canton elites to address the revitalization of the city. The leadership, feeling powerless or helpless during the economic faltering of the city over which they had little control, could control and maintain their dominance over subordinate groups within Canton. There was also a struggle of power between the arts leadership in Canton—one organization was entrenched in dated modernist museum ideas, the other organization wanted to be innovative and make art more accessible and popular. Each organization defined art differently and wanted their vision to be at the forefront of the arts revival in Canton. Despite my critical analysis of the power plays in Canton, I do think that some of the leadership whole-heartedly believed that the revitalization of the arts could improve the city’s morale and quality of life. *Kimono as*

\(^{50}\) I extend this to other Asian Americans, because in places where there are few Asian Americans (such as Canton, Ohio) Asian ethnicities are often conflated with one another. Although things may slowly shifting with successive generations, from personal experience, the idea of the Asian American as "foreigner within" still persists in Ohio. I will explore this further in the subsequent chapters. Lisa Lowe, *Immigrants Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006) 5-6.
Art and the auxiliary events attracted the largest audience in the history of CMA and demonstrated that people in Canton were interested in cultural activities.

Unfortunately, *Kimono as Art*, occurred at an inopportune time, as just eight months after the close of the exhibition, the Canton Museum of Art would find it necessary to institute a 5% pay cut for all staff, shorten operating hours, and implement a mandatory vacation for all staff (and subsequent closure of the museum) for two weeks during the summer over the next two years. The popularity of the exhibition could not save the museum from falling victim to the financial hardships faced by many museums across the country during this time.

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Figure 2.1 Map showing location of Stark County, Ohio (in red).
Figure 2.2 Relationship of Canton organizations involved in revitalization process.
Figure 2.3 *Giraffe* from *Critters Project*. Patrick Buckohr, Canton, Ohio (2008), 12' H, recycled steel truck parts.

Figure 2.4 *Downtown Cats*, Vickie Boatright (who also works under the moniker “BZTAT”), Canton, Ohio, 2010. Each panel is 4'W x 8'H. Paint (?) on wood panel.
CHAPTER THREE
KIMONO AS ART IN CANTON

"I am so glad our community embraced ‘Kimono’ so incredibly well. The reaction was phenomenal and they are the ones who really spread the word. Everyone from young to old got to learn more about Japanese culture, which is important in this global culture we live in."

The announcement of the Kimono as Art exhibition led to a flurry of activity by local cultural and educational organizations to create Japanese-themed events to go along with the exhibition. Participating organizations included nearby universities, different branches of the Stark County library system, and public and private K-12 schools. A handful of events were even created and organized by individuals or small groups of people with a particular niche interest, for example, the Japanese Film Festival held at the Palace Theatre, and several social events planned by manga groups. In the end, nearly eighty Japanese cultural events took place, encompassing a variety of forms and subject matter. Some included substantial Japanese cultural components, while others were only vaguely related.

My interest is in the organizational process and selection of events, particularly those sponsored or closely affiliated with ArtsinStark or the Canton Museum of Art (CMA). Given the scope of the exhibition and its numerous auxiliary events, I choose to focus on a few of the most prominent events that took place in Canton. The exhibition and its content were not expected to educate viewers about the complexity and nuances of Japanese culture alone. Rather, the intent of the planners was for visitors to visit the exhibition and attend at least one or two of the cultural events or performances to learn about Japanese culture.

In this chapter I will examine the inclusion of certain events and assess how they supported the stated mission of Kimono as Art “to expose people to Japanese culture.”

Who determined what was representative of Japanese culture? Why were some events favored for inclusion over others? And what role did Japanese and Japanese American


1 Robb Hankins, CEO, ArtsinStark, Interview with Author, Canton, Ohio, March 29, 2010.
volunteers have in determining what events should be included and how they should be presented? Before examining the auxiliary events, however, I will describe the development and organization of the *Kimono as Art* exhibition.

**Itchiku Kubota and *Tsujigahana***

In 2005, members of the Timken family from Canton, Ohio, visited the Itchiku Kubota Art Museum located by Lake Kawaguchi, near Mount Fuji. The museum was established to house the works of Itchiku Kubota, as well as continue the work on his last project, *Symphony of Light*. Kubota, a native of Tokyo, Japan, became fascinated by the lost technique of *tsujigahana*, a finely detailed style of kimono-dying that was practiced during the late 16th century, after viewing a piece at the Tokyo National Museum as a young man. Already apprenticed in the contemporary kimono-dying technique, *yūzen*, Kubota opened his own studio in Tokyo at the age of nineteen. After being held as a prisoner of war in Siberia during World War II, Kubota returned to his studio and devoted his life to replicating the visual quality of tsujigahana. However, given the difference in availability of materials utilized in the 16th century practice of tsujigahana, Kubota had to adapt his technique to modern materials. Further complicating Kubota’s desire to recreate tsujigahana, was the fact that there were no surviving detailed descriptions of the technique. Kubota referred to his developed technique as “Itchiku Tsujigahana.”

Kubota’s dream was to create an installation of eighty kimonos, placed side by side, that would form a panoramic landscape of Mount Fuji through the shift of the four seasons. Kubota, who passed away in 2003, was only able to complete thirty-four of the kimonos, covering autumn and winter. Thirty of the completed kimonos, known as *The Four Seasons* from the *Symphony of Light* series, were the highlight of the *Kimono as Art* exhibition.
exhibition. The exhibition also included a smaller series titled Mount Fuji, which consisted of five kimonos, each one depicting Mount Fuji at different times of the day.4

Kubota was greatly influenced by the work of French Impressionists, especially Claude Monet. In an interview printed in the Kimono as Art exhibition catalog Kubota’s son, Satoshi Kubota, explained that his father was far more influenced by art outside of Japan than art within Japan.5 Further, Satoshi Kubota felt that there was a disconnect between Kubota’s work in comparison to the work of many popular contemporary Japanese artists. He acknowledged Kubota’s work was influenced by nature; a quality that he personally felt was not present in most contemporary Japanese artists’ work.

The process for creating each kimono was extremely complicated and labor-intensive. Kubota wanted to have full control over every aspect of each piece’s construction. Strips of silk were dyed, dried, and then re-dyed, often multiples times, to create the variegated colors. Individual details were then added by hand, with brush and ink. The strips of silk were then sewn together to create the whole kimono. The kimonos also have a distinctive textural quality, which was created through a variety of stitching techniques. Kubota completed each process himself and as a result, each kimono took around one year to complete.6

The result of Kubota’s labors is richly colored, vibrant textile landscapes. Upon close inspection, like many French impressionist landscape paintings, the defining details of the landscape are almost indiscernible; the colors appear as organic shapes and blends of colors. However, when viewing a single kimono from a few feet away, trees, mountains, and additional details of the landscape become distinguishable. Another level of visual understanding is gained when the kimonos are viewed side-by-side, revealing the full panorama of the land.

The Four Seasons kimonos of Symphony of Light vary from the subtle muted tones of blues, brown and grays of the “winter” kimonos to predominantly bright orange,

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4 Ibid. 29.
yellow and red colors of the “autumn” kimonos. The kimonos may be viewed individually or as a series; either way they offer sophisticated blends of colors and textures on silk. However, Kubota intended for the kimonos to be viewed as a composite panoramic landscape, which is created when the kimonos are placed adjacent to one another.

The Canton-based Timken family (founders of the Timken Company) developed the initial idea for the Kimono as Art exhibition. In May 2005, William Timken, President of the Timken Foundation, and his wife, Susan, along with his brother and sister-in-law, Jack and Joy Timken, visited the Itchiku Kubota Art Museum. They were so impressed by the craftsmanship and aesthetic quality of the kimonos that they immediately decided they wanted to bring the work to the U.S. as a traveling exhibition that would visit two cities: San Diego and Canton. The primary reason for choosing these two areas was because the Timken Company had offices and manufacturing plants located in both cities. In short, members of the Timken family contacted ArtsinStark and the Canton Museum of Art and asked if the two organizations would partner together to manage and host an exhibition of Kubota’s work. When both organizations agreed, the Timken family via the Timken Foundation donated one million dollars to ArtsinStark to facilitate the exhibition.

Additionally, the exhibition was supported by a number of local businesses: Fred Olivieri Construction Company (the owner of this business built the cabinetry housing the kimonos on display), Hammond Construction and Diebold Incorporated, to name a few. Several Japanese companies also provided support for the exhibition including the Fuji Machine Manufacturing Company, Daido Steel, Toyota Tsusho Corporation, as well

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7 Symphony of Light is comprised of two separate series – The Four Seasons and The Universe. While The Four Seasons kimonos are displayed horizontally next to one another, The Universe kimonos were intended to be displayed above The Four Seasons kimonos, extending vertically up to five kimonos high in a pyramid shape intended to mimic the profile of Mount Fuji. Six kimonos that are part of The Universe series were not shown in Canton. These kimonos are brightly dyed in a rainbow of colors – visually they are very different from the Winter and Autumn kimonos of The Four Seasons. See Dale Carolyn Gluckman, “Symphony of Light,” in Kimono as Art: The Landscapes of Itchiku Kubota (New York, NY: Thames and Hudson, 2008). Exhibition Catalog.


9 The Timken Foundation, a 501(3) c non-profit organization created by Timken family, focuses on putting funds into communities in which Timken Company manufacturing plants are located. ArtsinStark, as the organization that oversees several other Canton cultural organizations, including CMA, was awarded the $1 million, which they distributed among organizations.
as several other automobile parts manufacturing companies.\textsuperscript{10} All of the Japanese companies supporting the exhibition had ties to the Timken Company in which the company was either a customer of theirs or vice versa.

According to M. J. Albacete, director of the CMA, ArtsinStark was in charge of marketing as well as developing the set of cultural events and activities known as KimonoFest, intended to compliment the exhibition. The Kimono Leadership Committee was established to manage various details, such as development of the cultural events, management of the opening receptions and galas, solicitation of volunteers, and decoration of the Great Court in the Cultural Center and the foyer of the museum. In an interview, Albacete mentioned that the committee had over one hundred people serving on it. A five-person team consisting of Robb Hankins and M. J. Albacete, along with volunteers, Jane Timken, Heather Fisher and Carole Savistano, headed the committee. Unfortunately, no one I spoke with at either the Canton Museum of Art or ArtsinStark was able to explain to me exactly how the committee was structured or what subcommittees were developed. Albacete explained that there was never a clear lead person in charge--there were multiple leaders with different visions for Kimono as Art.\textsuperscript{11} In fact, Hankins was unsure if a well-developed structure with defined titles and specific job descriptions ever existed. Hankins further admitted that the Timken Foundation had even hired a consultant for two days to assist with defining the structure of the Kimono Leadership Committee, yet after the consultant left committee members were still unclear about their roles.

Preparations for Kimono as Art

After ArtsinStark was asked by the Timken family to host the exhibition, Robb Hankins explained that they wanted to approach the exhibition "with the idea that it would be a community-wide celebration."\textsuperscript{12} The Timkens, Hankins, and Albacete were convinced that the exhibition would bring in visitors from outside of the county, and outside of the state. Hankins immediately began promoting the exhibition, emphasizing

\textsuperscript{10} Kimono as Art: Exhibit Sponsors, Canton Museum of Art website, http://Cantonart.org/32.  
\textsuperscript{11} Hankins, Interview, March 29, 2010.  
\textsuperscript{12} Dan Kane, "New Exhibition Inspires Japanese-themed [sic]," Canton Repository, February 8, 2009.
that it would be a "community-wide celebration" and likened the viewing of the exhibition to "seeing Japan for $10."\textsuperscript{13}

ArtsinStark began marketing the exhibition in early 2008. A \textit{Kimono as Art} "traveling booth" was created and set up at several summer community festivals across Stark County. The booth was primarily aimed at attracting the interest of children and families and offered interactive activities such as origami-making. A \textit{Kimono as Art} float was created for the 2008 Professional Football Hall of Fame festival parade, which took place at the beginning of August (See Figure 3.4).

In 2008, the Stark County Public Library system launched an event called "One Book, One Community," in which a particular book was highlighted with an expectation that it would be read by participants who could then attend a series of lectures and discussions that dealt with different subjects or issues in the book. In the fall of 2008, \textit{Nisei Daughter} by Japanese American writer, Monica Sone, became the book of choice for a six week long series of talks, lectures and discussions. Sone, a resident of Canton, wrote and published \textit{Nisei Daughter} in 1953.\textsuperscript{14} The book was one of the first published accounts about Japanese American internment and the first autobiographical novel published by a Nisei woman.\textsuperscript{15}

It is reasonable to assume that Sone's book was chosen to complement the forthcoming \textit{Kimono as Art} exhibition because of Sone's ethnic background. The "kick-off" event for the \textit{One Book, One Community} series took place at the Canton Museum of Art. During the event, Albacete talked briefly about the upcoming \textit{Kimono as Art} exhibition and showed a short three and half minute video that gave an overview of the exhibition and an introduction to Itchiku Kubota. After Albacete's talk, Sone was invited to speak to the audience about her experience in internment camps during World War II.

In the six weeks that followed, five \textit{Nisei Daughter} book discussions were held at several libraries across the county. In addition, three panel discussions were held at several venues in Canton. The themes and titles of the panel discussion were interesting---"Could History Repeat Itself 66 Years Later?" "Discrimination and Oppression," and

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{14} Sone settled in Canton after the internment with her husband. She passed away in 2011.
\item \textsuperscript{15} "Monica Sone," \textit{Densho Encyclopedia}, http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Monica%20Sone/\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
"Honor, Patriotism, Loyalty." The main topic of dialogue—Asian Americans—was unusual for Canton. Another Japanese American woman, Masie Yamauchi, also gave a talk about her internment as part of the series.

In November of 2008, Mount Union College, located in the nearby city of Alliance, hosted a "Kimono Kick-off" reception for the exhibition. Several offices on the Mount Union campus including the President’s office, the public marketing office, and the International Studies Services department supported the reception. Dawn Adams from the International Studies Services department, along with Dr. Naoko Oyabu-Mathis, a professor of sociology, planned the evening’s festivities and events. M.J. Albacete and Jack and Joy Timken were in attendance at the reception and both, Albacete and Timken, spoke briefly about the exhibition.

Oyabu-Mathis, who came as a former exchange student to Mount Union and decided to stay in Ohio, oversaw the planned cultural demonstrations for the reception. Another Japanese professor from the Japanese language department recruited students—mostly Japanese—to participate in various capacities at the reception. Events included a demonstration of a tea ceremony, calligraphy painting, origami-making, and a piano performance in which a Japanese pianist performed a set of songs that were Japanese in origin (“Sakura,” “Asian Dream Song,” “Yuyake Koyake,” and “Sukiyaki”). In addition, there were examples of ikebana (flower arrangements) and furoshiki (Japanese style wrapping) on display.

Another, “kick-off reception” was held in November 2008 at the Canton Cultural Center. The “Essence of Japan” event took place in the Great Court and served as another promotional event to get Canton residents excited about the upcoming exhibition. Over 450 people paid $30 per ticket for this sold-out event, which would allow visitors to “immerse themselves in a Japanese experience.” The Great Court was decorated with giant pink paper lanterns, “cherry blossom-like” flowers hung from the ceilings, and shoji

17 Email exchange with Mount Union Kimono as Art reception volunteer, August 21, 2012.
screens framed the reception area. The event included "sushi-tasting," sake tasting, and entertainment.

The Canton Museum of Art also renovated their facilities in 2008 in preparation for the exhibition. The museum's lobby was revamped with a sleek-looking reception desk, new modern-styled furniture for visitors to rest, and an expanded gift shop. The restrooms were also updated in anticipation of the large crowds. The main gallery was permanently reequipped with new lighting for the exhibition. A local company constructed all the wooden cabinets in which the kimonos were displayed. Even a Japanese teahouse was constructed and temporarily installed in the museum's courtyard for the run of the exhibition.

**Kimono as Art in San Diego**

In November 2008, the *Kimono as Art* exhibition opened in San Diego. In San Diego, the exhibition was jointly hosted by the San Diego Museum of Art and the Timken Museum of Art. The exhibition opened with far less fanfare and press coverage than in Canton, yet Derrick Cartwright, director of the San Diego Museum of Art, called the exhibition a "tremendous success" for the museum. In San Diego, nearly 60,000 people attended the exhibition - well over the projected audience of 50,000. Kubota's masterwork, *Symphony of Lights*, was installed at the San Diego Museum of Art. The Timken Museum displayed six kimonos, which included Kubota's *Mt. Fuji* series.

There were several listings of the exhibition in San Diego event calendars in newspapers and on websites. Otherwise, there were not many descriptive reviews written about the exhibition in San Diego. In the only comprehensive review I could find, there was a notable difference in the way the kimonos were described in California in comparison to their descriptions in Ohio. In San Diego, the writer paid attention to how

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20 "Sushi-tasting" was the phrase used in promotional materials about the "Essence of Japan" event - this odd-seeming phrase was probably used because many of the Canton residents had probably never eaten sushi before.


the kimonos functioned as works of art in themselves, and less so on their ability to serve as symbolic signifiers of Japanese culture.

In Robert L. Pincus’ exhibition review in the San Diego Union-Tribune he wrote about the visual elements of the kimonos in detail and compared Kubota’s landscape depictions on them to the Impressionist paintings by Claude Monet. In his comparison of Kubota’s paintings and methods to Monet’s, Pincus pointed out that unlike Monet, who wanted to paint things as he saw them, Kubota’s creations were idealized landscapes. Pincus rarely mentioned the kimonos themselves (instead referring to them as paintings or landscapes) and while he provided some biographical information on Kubota and the artist’s work with tsujigahana, he did not focus on specific cultural influences in the work. This was very different from what happened in Canton, where the focus was on utilizing the Kimono as Art exhibition and its connection to Japan as reason for creating a “celebration” of Japanese culture.

Kimono as Art Exhibition in Canton

The development of the Kimono as Art exhibition was a collaborative effort between CMA’s curatorial and exhibition team and representatives from the Itchiku Kubota Art Museum. The installation of the exhibition was handled by a representative from the Itchiku Kubota Museum as well as two of Kubota’s grandsons, Hideaki Fujii and Hiromichi Kubota, who traveled from Japan to assist with the installation. Kubota’s son, Satoshi Kubota, traveled from Japan to attend the opening of the exhibition.

CMA anticipated large crowds for the exhibition and as such, made arrangements to facilitate large groups of visitors. The Canton Cultural Center’s Great Court was utilized as an entertainment and staging area for visitors waiting to enter the exhibition. The court, which had been the venue for the exhibition’s Opening Gala, retained most of the decorations from the gala (pink paper lanterns, cherry blossom ornaments, and shoji screens) At the main entrance of the Cultural Center, which led directly into the Great Court, visitors entered through a large red torii gate. Areas of the Great Court, around

25 Ibid.
the entrance to the Cultural Center and entrance to the museum, were made to look like a
"Japanese Garden." In the "garden," there were a number of natural elements brought in
as decoration—small potted trees and bushes, large rocks, and small concrete pagoda-like
structures arranged in beds of gravel. Shoji screens lined the walls of the Great Court
(See Figure 3.5). A vertical banner depicting a young Japanese girl dressed in a kimono
hung at the entrance to the Canton Museum of Art, with the word "Welcome" printed
across the top. The girl in the image was depicted as peaking out from under a red
umbrella over her right shoulder. With her left hand extend and palm up, she beckoned
the visitor into the museum. This image was used throughout the Cultural Center as a
way-finding sign (See Figure 3.6).

Once inside the museum, the visitors soon entered into the galleries. The CMA
exhibition space consists of seven individual galleries (See Figure 3.8). In the first two
galleries, the Schneider and Timken galleries, there was an exhibition of ceramic work by
Hawai'i-born Japanese American artist, Toshiko Takaezu. The small display of
Takaezu's work received little press coverage. These works were chosen for display
along with Kimono as Art because of Takaezu's Japanese ethnic background. According
to Albacete, Takaezu's work was the only work in the museum's permanent collection
created by an Asian or Asian American artist.26 In the few newspaper articles that
mentioned Takaezu's exhibition, there was confusion about Takaezu's ethnic background
as she was interchangeably referred to as Japanese or Japanese Hawaiian in different
reviews. 27 The term "Japanese American" was never used to describe her.

The Fry Gallery was dedicated to information about Itchiku Kubota and the
process of tsujigahana. On one wall was a timeline of Kubota's life, on another wall was
a step-by-step explanation of Kubota's process of dying and constructing the kimonos. 28
CMA did not generate the textual information about Kubota and his artwork. Kimono as
Art curator and catalog editor, Dale Carolyn Gluckman, former curator at Los Angles

26 M. J. Albacete, Director, Canton Museum of Art, Interview by author, Canton, Ohio, March 25, 2010.
Albacete discussed how he traveled Maryland to meet with Takaezu and purchase some of her artwork for
the museum. Takaezu ended up donating several pieces to CMA.
27 In one article on Kimono as Art, Takeazu is referred to as "Hawaiian-Japanese." Steve Stephens, "Beauty
to Dye For," Columbus Dispatch, February 22, 2009, Travel section. In another article she is simply called
28 Marylyne Pitz, "Kimono as Canvas: Ohio Museum Displays Japanese Designer's Colorful Silk
County Museum of Art and a specialist in Asian textiles, provided this information for the exhibition.

There were two small galleries located off the side of the Schnieder, Timken, and Fry galleries. In one gallery visitors were able to watch a thirty-minute film about Itchiku Kubota. Once visitors finished watching the film, they walked down a connecting corridor from the Fry Gallery into the Langenbach Gallery, where Kubota's *Mount Fuji* series and several individual kimonos were displayed. Once they walked through to the adjacent Preyer Gallery, visitors would see Kubota's *Symphony of Light*. The kimonos were arranged in an arc formation that extended around three sides of the gallery, thus partially encircling the viewer. The viewer became immersed in landscape imagery and colors. The size and scale of the installation of *Symphony of Light* was larger than anything the CMA had displayed in its galleries previously. Visitors to *Kimono as Art* described the exhibition experience as “wonderful,” “incredible,” even “spiritual.” Others said the exhibition was “overwhelming,” and “impossible to describe.”

The exhibition offered little educational information about Japanese culture. However, the auxiliary events created to accompany *Kimono as Art* were intended to educate visitors about Japanese culture. In the early planning stages of the exhibition, ArtsinStark decided that they would create a series of “Japanese cultural events.” ArtsinStark, along with numerous educational and cultural organizations in Stark County created more than eighty events. These events not only took place in Canton, but also cities outside of Canton, such as Massillon, Alliance, North Canton and Green, and as far away as the cities of Akron and Kent. The enthusiastic participation by other community organizations was far more than the Kimono Leadership Committee could have predicted.

ArtsinStark and CMA put together a series of cultural performances and demonstrations designated as “KimonoFest.” Immediately, other local organizations and

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businesses saw the possibility of generating revenue from the influx of outside visitors and began to develop their own programs to coincide with the exhibition. Some organizations worked with ArtsinStark for the development of their events, while other organizations simply created “Japanese cultural events” without the consultation of ArtsinStark, CMA, or Japanese and Japanese American community members. The eighty-plus events were extremely diverse; they included dance performances (Japanese and ballet), tea ceremony demonstrations, calligraphy workshops, Japanese cooking classes, a Madame Butterfly lecture, taiko drumming, and talk by George Takei. (See Appendix C for list of events.) The relation to Japanese culture of some of the events was nebulous at times.

KimonoFest

Approximately ten events, which were overseen by the Kimono Leadership Committee, were officially recognized as KimonoFest. A committee of staff and volunteers from the Canton Museum of Art and ArtsinStark organized these events with the assistance of Kumi Day, a Japanese resident of Canton, who would become known as the “face of Kimono as Art.” The KimonoFest events consisted of performances and demonstrations such as a Japanese tea ceremony, Japanese dance, taiko drumming, and jujitsu.

Also included were a number of workshops focusing on cultural practices of a “craft”-nature. For example, there were workshops and demonstrations on origami, ikebana, suminagashi (paper marbling), furoshiki (gift wrapping), sumi painting and shodo (calligraphy), and kumihimo (Japanese style of braiding). These events were geared towards families and children, offering children the opportunity to participate in hands-on activities. Storytelling and a children’s kite workshop were also a part of the official “KimonoFest” events. The events were free and open to the public with the exception of the tea ceremony.

31 Day became the main Japanese cultural consultant for the exhibition after being asked by Jane Timken. ArtsinStark awarded Day recognition as “Arts Volunteer of the Year” in late 2009. She was referred to as the “face” of the Kimono as Art exhibition. “Arts Council to Honor Seven,” Press Release. ArtsinStark, November 4, 2009.
Visitors who wanted to participate in the tea ceremony could purchase a ticket for twenty dollars. For five dollars, visitors could watch from the benches inside the makeshift teahouse (See Figure 3.7). The ceremony would have also been viewable from outside of the courtyard in which the teahouse was built, as there were windows along three sides of the courtyard. Thus, the tea ceremony was visible to all visitors to the museum. Day, who trained in the practice of tea ceremony for nine years in her hometown of Hiroshima, led the tea ceremony exercises that took place over several weekends.

ArtsinStark Sponsored Events

ArtsinStark sponsored another distinct set of events separate from KimonoFest. This included the Canton Ballet’s performance, Japanese Dances, the Canton Symphony’s performance of Madame Butterfly, several events hosted by the Massillon Museum of Art, and the popular sumo wrestling demonstration held at the Cultural Center. ArtsinStark provided financial support for these events and promoted them as being affiliated with Kimono as Art.

The Canton Ballet Company, a pre-professional ballet school and company, brought in New York City-based Japanese choreographer, Saeko Ichinohe, to work with students to create a special dance for a performance during the Kimono as Art exhibition. Ichinohe became well known for her choreography, which blends “Western” styles of dances like ballet and modern, with “historical Japanese traditions.” Her work is complimentary to Kubota’s paintings in many ways, with vibrantly colored kimono-styled costumes, movements that are contemporary, yet influenced by “historical Japanese traditions,” and nature-inspired titles like Whispering Winds, Autumn Leaves, and Willow Tree. In Whispering Winds, the dance created for the Canton Ballet, the sheerness of the pink and orange georgette fabric in the kimono-like costumes coupled

32 Dan Kane, “Steeped in tradition,” About Magazine, March 2009. About Magazine is a local publication for Stark County; this article was a feature on Kumi Day.
34 Of note, on the listing of Whispering Winds under Ichinohe’s repertoire on the dance company’s website, the Kubota exhibition is mistakenly referred to as Homage to Nature, rather than Kimono as Art. Perhaps this was an early working title for the exhibition?
with the structural elements of ballet combined with exaggerated body movements and positions unique to Japanese dance, lent the piece a romanticized, Orientalized feeling. Along with Ichinohe's composition, Canton Ballet resident choreographer, Angelo Lemmo, created a Japanese-themed piece for the performance. In reviews, *Japanese Dances* was described as the "thrilling result of the blending of ancient Oriental cultures."  

One of the most popular events was the Canton Symphony’s performance of *Madame Butterfly*. Tickets were sold out for the one-night event, with nearly 1,500 people attending the performance of the famed Puccini opera. *Madame Butterfly* tells the fictional story of “Cio-Cio-San,” a young Japanese woman who falls in love with the naval officer Pinkerton and bears his child. Pinkerton leaves shortly after their wedding and Cio-Cio-San waits for his return. When he finally returns, he brings his American wife with him and comes to retrieve his child. Upon hearing this news, Cio-Cio-San commits suicide.

Many scholars have harshly criticized this story, which recapitulates the Orientalist trope of the suicide-inclined and submissive Asian woman. Albacete was familiar with some of the controversy surrounding *Madame Butterfly* and its representation of Japan through Orientalized depictions of Japanese women, but justified its inclusion in the *Kimono as Art* events by stating that he thought Satoshi Kubota and his wife enjoyed the performance.

Jacqueline Quirk, a woman of Italian descent, performed the role of Cio-Cio-San. In an interview that appeared in the *Canton Repository*, Quirk explained the she felt an affinity with “Butterfly” although she does not elaborate on this or give specifics.

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38 Dan Kane, "‘Madame Butterfly’ at Umstattd Hall Delivers Opera Grandly," *Canton Repository*, April 24, 2009. Quirk, placed third and was the only American finalist in the 2008 International Madame Butterfly Competition in Nagasaki, Japan.
She also explained that living in Hawai‘i exposed her to many Asian influences, and implied that she was well suited for performing the role of a Japanese woman.

Quirk, performed the part of Cio-Cio-San in “yellowface.” She wore a black wig and fixed her make up in such a way as to “look Japanese” (Figure 3.9). Kumi Day was asked to assist with costuming Quirk for the event, but told me that the kimono was a stage costume, not a “real” kimono and she was therefore not really able to help with the costuming process. When asked, Day called the performance of Madame Butterfly “good,” and seemed rather indifferent to a non-Japanese person performing as Japanese.40

The Massillon Museum of Art created the few events that catered to a young adult crowd. Shortly before the Kimono as Art opening, the museum hosted “Club New Fukasuki” night, which was inspired by Tokyo nightclubs and paid homage to the Harajuku41 and Lolita youth fashion culture of Tokyo. Day explained to me the “Fukasuki” was a nonsensical made-up word that did not translate in Japanese.42 This was a social event aimed at attracting young adults in their 20’s and 30’s. Attendees were encouraged to dress up in Harajuku-like fashions. Although, it was seemingly out of place with other Japanese cultural events in Canton, this was one of the few events that recognized a contemporary element of Japanese popular culture.

The Massillon Museum also organized and co-hosted the “Japanese-inspired” Midori Fashion Show with the Student Fashion Organization of Kent State University, in which fashion-design students where given the opportunity to design and show off their creations inspired by Kimono as Art. Some of students’ clothing designs reflected the Harajuku street style of fashion popular in Japan, while other pieces of clothing were influenced by the actual structure of a kimono. Many of the dresses worn by the fashion show’s organizers and participants were garments that more closely resembled a Chinese cheongsam or a fusion of styles from more than one Asian country, rather than anything

39 Robert Lee describes “yellowface” as the exaggeration of “racial” features that have been designated ‘Oriental,' such as ‘slanted’ eyes, overbite, and mustard-yellow skin color.” Robert G. Lee, Orientals: Asian Americans in Popular Culture (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999) 2.
41 Japanese youth fashion cultures and street styles in Tokyo such as Lolita, loliqoth, decora, etc. have collectively become known as “Harajuku” in the U.S. Harajuku is the common name for the area in the Shibuya ward of Tokyo in which many of the youth congregate. The name “Harajuku” was popularized in the U.S. by popular music artist, Gwen Stefani, who for a short time, toured around with a group of Japanese girls known as her “Harajuku Girls.”
specifically Japanese. This highlighted the participants' lack of knowledge regarding the differences between Asian cultures, or revealed their misconception that "all Asian cultures were the same," or their indifference toward recognizing the distinctions between the cultures (Figure 3.10).

The sumo wrestling demonstration became the most controversial event associated with *Kimono as Art* and initiated a dialogue between the arts organizations about what was appropriate for representing Japanese culture. ArtsinStark sponsored the event and brought in two sumo wrestlers, Byambajav Ulambayar, a world champion, and Tamir Dolgormaa, to give two demonstrations of sumo wrestling, to crowds of nearly 450 viewers each.43

In an interview, Albacete voiced his displeasure at the sumo event being affiliated with *Kimono as Art*, feeling that it was inappropriate because it could have attracted a raucous crowd of people whose main objective would have been to be entertained rather than learn about culture. Tom Wachunas, a local artist, curator, and lecturer for Kent State University, posted a statement on his blog, *Artwach*, regarding his discontent with the inclusion of sumo as well. In his post, Wachunas compared art museums to "living sanctuaries," and explained that sumo was too "low brow" to occupy the same space as the "genius" Itchiku Kubota's works of art.44 This statement reveals how invested the Canton Museum of Art's leadership and many of its supporters were in an elitist and modernist model of the museum. For the city's leadership and visitors, CMA museum operated as a "ceremonial monument," or "temple" to borrow the words of art historian Carol Duncan. As Duncan explains, modernist museums (like CMA) are "carefully marked off and culturally designated as special, reserved for a particular kind of contemplation and learning experience and demanding a special quality of attention,"45 and hence, speaks to and attracts a particular kind of viewer who venerates the museum and the museum experience. The "fear of social contagion," something that occurred in

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19th century museums when first opened up to the general public, was still present in 21st century Canton.⁴⁶

Robb Hankins, who was a major supporter of the sumo event, viewed its inclusion as a way to help *Kimono as Art* appeal to a broader audience. Hankins defended his tactic explaining, “There were people coming to see sumo wrestling who [sic] didn’t even know *Kimono* was next door at the Canton Museum of Art.”⁴⁷

Unofficial Affiliated Events

There were many “unofficial” events that took place throughout the three months the kimono exhibition was at CMA. These were often Japanese-themed events created by local organizations outside of ArtsinStark or the Cultural Center that affiliated their events with *Kimono as Art* sometimes without the consent or knowledge of either ArtsinStark or the Canton Museum of Art. When asked about his feelings regarding the affiliation of these “unofficial” events with *Kimono as Art*, Hankins was enthusiastic about the unsolicited participation of outside organizations and felt that they only helped fuel the popularity of the exhibition and ArtsinStark’s events.

Some of these events included an original play about the life of Itchiku Kubota titled *Master Kubota and Me*, created by Canton residents, Lois DiGiacomo and Frank Motz; a talk by famed Japanese American actor, George Takei; Japanese cooking classes at one of the local grocery stores; an Asian textile workshop by the Cleveland Museum of Art; and a performance of *The Mikado* at the Kent State University Stark Campus.

Critique

The content of the auxiliary events became the subject of much debate among the local organizers, especially over the appropriateness of what should or could represent Japanese culture. Tom Wachunas, an important volunteer for *Kimono as Art* in the early planning stages, felt he was ultimately dismissed from volunteering because he voiced

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⁴⁷ Hankins, Interview, March 29, 2010.
criticism over the inclusion of sumo wrestling. He was highly critical of the ArtsinStark and Hankins’ efforts to be inclusive and appeal to a wide cross-section of the community.

Hankins’ response to my concerns spoke volumes about the operative philosophy behind Kimonofest – the myriad of events and activities that have been attached to the Kimono exhibit. Kimonofest was clearly designed to offer and reflect the cultural cornucopia that is modern-day Japan to as wide an audience as possible. ‘Not lowbrow, not highbrow, but every brow,’ Hankins wrote. Accompanying all this cultural bric-a-brac, this buffet of all things for all people, it seems to me, is a throw-caution-to-the-wind attitude that experiencing art must first, by definition, be fun.\(^4\)

While I agree with Wachunas’ description of the many *Kimono as Art* affiliated events as a “buffet of all things for all people,” I do not necessarily feel that Hankins’ foremost concern was making art “fun.” ArtsinStark is a countywide organization that is committed to “using the arts to create smarter kids, new jobs, and healthier communities.”\(^4\)^9 Hankins’ and ArtsinStark’s foremost concern was community involvement, which ideally should include everyone in the community. Their focus was on doing away with the old modernist museum models and making the arts inviting and accessible to diverse audiences. Accessibility does not necessarily equate with only “fun.” For example, ArtsinStark sponsored events and demonstrations such as the tea ceremony and workshops on Japanese practices such as ikebana, origami, etc. While these things may be interesting and entertaining, they are not necessarily “fun” in the non-serious, carefree sense that Albacete and Wachunas seem to imply. I believe their intentions were less about providing “fun” and more about reaching out to non-traditional visitors and hence “opening up the museum.” As shown in the previous chapter, for Albacete and Wachunas and others like them, art is not for everyone--or more specifically, *art museums* are not for everyone. Art museums, however, cannot sustain themselves by promoting an older model of an exclusionary exhibitionary institution.\(^5\)

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\(^4\) Wachunas, “Kimono Buffet.” (Emphasis added.)

\(^9\) ArtsinStark tagline, ArtsinStark website, http://www.artsinstark.com

\(^5\) Bennett, *Birth of the Museum*, 73. Bennett defines the exhibitionary complex as an instrument for the “moral and cultural regulation of the working classes” the developed mid-19th century when museums first started becoming public institutions. Members of the working class could potentially be “improved” if they were able to observe the middle class behavior in the museum space.
They must change and appeal to different aesthetic tastes in order to remain relevant and to avoid alienating potential audiences.

Again, my focus in this chapter is to examine the inclusion of certain events offered to support the stated mission of KimonoFest to “expose people to Japanese culture.” Albacete and Wachunas were against the inclusion of sumo wrestling as a part of Kimono as Art because of the unsophisticated crowd they assumed it would attract to the Cultural Center. Sumo has a long history in Japan affiliated with a tradition of Shinto practices. Although it has become a spectator sport in Japan with high stakes betting, and in recent years, has come under the cloud of controversy with fixed matches and connections to the yakuza, each sumo match is preceded by the practice of Shinto ritual. Albacete and Wachunas were concerned that the Canton audience would become fixated on the novelty of the sumo wrestlers—watching large, obese men push each other around—and hence, misunderstand its meanings and not really learn anything substantial about Japanese culture.

Some of their concerns were valid. However, I would argue that the same critical consideration must be given to the inclusion of Madame Butterfly. Was the audience of Madame Butterfly any different from those who watched the sumo demonstration? Were not the members of both audiences there for entertainment purposes? The audience members for sumo, whatever their understanding of sumo wrestling was in the end, were at least viewing an event that was rooted in Japanese cultural tradition, featuring wrestlers who, while they were not ethnically Japanese, were professionals in the sport of sumo wrestling. The viewers of Madame Butterfly, however, were observers of an Orientalized interpretation of Japanese culture created by a non-Japanese person. Respected cultural critics have faulted performances like The Mikado and Madame Butterfly for perpetuating objectionable and stereotypical depictions of Japanese culture. In other words, the depictions in question are not representative of an “authentic” Japanese culture.

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51 Hankins, Interview, March 29, 2010.
53 Gina Marchetti analyzes Madame Butterfly and the continued appropriation of its themes in Romance in the “Yellow Peril,” 78-108, 176-201. Dorinne Kondo discusses her role in the organization of protests against a performance of The Mikado at Pomona College in Claremont California in About Face: Performing Race in Fashion and Theater (New York: Routledge, 1997).
Yet, Wachunas felt that sumo wrestling was too lowbrow to be held at the Cultural Center, a venue that he considered to be “highbrow.” He even alluded to the fact that he found sumo wrestling’s inclusion “tasteless.” Both Albacete and Wachunas were concerned about the type of audience that sumo would attract. One can only guess, given their concern, that they assumed the sumo attendees would be unlike them—working class, uncultured, and unfamiliar with how to properly behave in a museum setting. Hankins, on the other hand, did not care about the socio-economic status, educational background, or cultural knowledge of attendees. His objective was to get as many people in the door as possible and reach the broadest possible audience. In particular, Hankins wanted to attract the working and lower middle classes, two groups largely overlooked by CMA, since this could potentially broaden the museum’s audience.

Wachunas, in another blog post, praised the Madame Butterfly performance, stating that he felt it “herald(ed) significant and remarkable growth in Canton’s cultural profile.”54 And Albacete, while admitting he was fully aware of the controversies surrounding it, still praised the performance and even offered a lecture about the opera at CMA. The concern voiced by these men and others like them, was not really about the authenticity of the representation of Japanese culture, but about what they felt were appropriate events or performances to take place inside of the museum. They envisioned the museum building as comparable to a religious space. Their concern was with maintaining the museum space as a place for manifestations of “high culture” and educated visitors.

The class politics between the major arts organizations in Canton became evident when examining the dialogue that surrounded Madame Butterfly versus sumo wrestling. Sumo wrestling, which is perhaps more accurately reflective of Japanese culture than Madame Butterfly, was disdained and criticized by the upper middle class organizers and their supporters within the community. Their misguided application of Western aesthetic standards to sumo wrestling, led them to believe that the sport would be distasteful and inappropriate for inclusion among the Kimono as Art cultural events. However, Madame Butterfly, which presented an Orientalist interpretation of Japanese culture, was seen as

the high point of the cultural revival in Canton. Why was it that a performance that starred a white woman in “yellowface,” among a selection of events that were to be focused on Japanese culture, was seen as the pinnacle of high culture during these events? How can this be understood as “high culture,” when the ethnic culture that is supposed to be represented, is not truly represented in an accurate way?

Yet, despite all the organizers’ best intentions and consultations with Day about cultural accuracy, white performers in yellowface still found a way into a number of *Kimono as Art* events. KSU Stark’s performance of *The Mikado*, conflated a number of Asian cultures and featured performers in yellowface. During the *Kimono as Art* public opening, “Meliko, the Geisha Girl,” who not only had a made-up pseudo-Japanese sounding name, featured a white woman in yellowface and Japanese dress (Figure 3.11), who performed on the same stage as the Japanese American Sho-Jo-Ji dancers. Promotional materials for the Canton Ballet’s *Japanese Dances* featured a Caucasian girl made up in yellowface for the flyer. The *Art is Alive* event, an annual event held at the Cultural Center in which local artists exhibit and sell their work, had a tie-in theme to *Kimono as Art* and the artists were encouraged to dress accordingly to go along with the “Japanese” theme. It is disturbing that in the 21st century, performances in yellowface can still occur openly without much criticism.

Throughout the events, it is evident there was little or no thought given to performing “Japanese” people and Japanese culture. Perhaps non-Japanese participants felt free to do so without being self-conscious since it was highly unlikely they would be subject to criticism since there were few people of Japanese ancestry living in the city or surrounding areas. In fact, very few Japanese participants attended the events. In my interviews, I was surprised to learn that nearly all of the Japanese and Japanese Americans participants I spoke with did not attend any other Japanese cultural events other than those with which they were directly involved. There was an implicit understanding among the Japanese and Japanese American participants that the *Kimono as Art* events were not for them.

Non-Japanese organizers largely maintained control over the content and development of the *Kimono as Art* events. Albacete, Wachunas, and others like them showcased Japan and Japanese culture by using a romanticized and Orientalist lens.
They created events they wanted to see and offered what they thought were appropriate representations of Japan. "Western" ideas about Japanese culture were valued over Japanese perspectives. Questions about the appropriateness of stereotypical representations were dismissed or never raised in favor of a Westernized notion of what constituted "high culture" in Japan.

Kumi Day told me of one instance in which someone suggested playing background music during the tea ceremony demonstrations. When Day told them that it was not appropriate to have music playing during the tea ceremony, they replied, "But won't it be awkward with just silence?" Day further had to explain, "No, this is not awkward — this is a very spiritual silence." Day said that she continued arguing with KimonoFest organizers over the background music issue, until they finally conceded.

What is problematic here is not only the organizers' inability to accept or acknowledge Japanese cultural differences, but also their insistence that the cultural specialist (and in many cases the person of Japanese descent) lacked an understanding of how a practice should be properly presented. The final selection of events thus revealed the authority the non-Japanese organizers wielded over the content of events. My interviews with key people involved in the organization of the events furthermore showed that the organizers felt that Japanese volunteers were not always qualified to present their own culture. Hence, although non-Japanese organizers sought the assistance and approval of Japanese in the community or from the area, they were reluctant to relinquish complete control over the content and presentation style.

Albacete explained that he wanted visitors to understand that Kubota was a 20th century artist and that Kubota's kimonos were contemporary pieces of art. It seemed that most of the visitors were cognizant that Kubota was a contemporary artist, but the events and language surrounding Kimono as Art still showed that the visitors and organizers maintained a wistful vision of a Japan trapped in a pre-modern time warp. "Tradition" and "nature" were two words continually used in reference to Kimono as Art and events in the many reviews of the exhibition that appeared in local newspapers and magazines. Just as Kubota's kimonos might be perceived as idealized landscapes of Japan, many of the events surrounding Kimono as Art created a composite picture of a Japan that was

pastoral and romantic, embedded with “ancient” traditions—in essence reflecting the Orientalist idea of Asia as “timeless” and “unchanging.”

The exhibition and its related auxiliary events presented a mixed understanding of Japanese culture to the audience. The difficulty of having multiple leaders, one hundred volunteers, and the lack of a well-defined organizational structure within the Kimono Leadership Committee resulted in a varied and seemingly haphazard collection of events. These events created a picture based on preexisting notions or stereotypes of Japan.

The participation of Japanese volunteers did help in creating a schedule of events for KimonoFest that were suitable for inclusion as practices of “Japanese culture,” albeit somewhat superficial practices of culture. How much could a visitor really learn about Japanese culture from making origami, practicing ikebana or participating in one of the other workshops or demonstrations? While these events were not particularly offensive, ArtsinStark and the Canton Museum of Art supported and promoted other events that were, such as Madame Butterfly, The Mikado, and the so-called “historical performances” of Meliko the Geisha Girl. These performances presented the audience with objectionable constructions of Japanese culture and featured white performers in yellowface with no sense of irony. However, the participation and input of Japanese volunteers in the auxiliary event planning could not guarantee that culturally inaccurate and Orientalist performances would not surface.

In conclusion, we might surmise that a large part of the rift between the two major arts organizations in the Kimono as Art planning process was the result of pre-existing socio-cultural politics in Canton. Both organizations had similar mission objectives—to provide enriching art experiences for the community—but the leadership of each organization had different ideas about how best to execute their respective missions. They each had a different type of visitor in mind and seemed more concerned with attracting that particular type of visitor than discussing the merits of the content they wanted to feature in their auxiliary events. In addition, they each had different ideas about what constituted an appropriate representation of Japanese culture. In several cases they executed their plans without concern for what their Japanese participants considered

56 Meliko the Geisha Girl is listed as a “Historical Performance” in several event listings for Kimono as Art events, including on the ArtsinStark Facebook page, which can be found here: http://www.facebook.com/events/62618993139/.
appropriate or accurate. Perhaps most troubling, the non-Japanese *Kimono as Art* organizers implied that the Japanese volunteers or cultural specialists were incapable of presenting an appropriate presentation of Japanese cultural practices. Hence, these Japanese participants helped to facilitate a blockbuster exhibition and supporting events that were supposedly about them, but not for them.
Figure 3.1 Installation of Itchiku Kubota’s *Symphony of Light* in the Canton Museum of Art.

Figure 3.2 Three kimonos from *Symphony of Light* series – effectively shows the continuous landscape that is visible when kimonos are placed next to each other.
Figure 3.3 Detail of one of Itchiku Kubota's kimonos from the *Symphony of Light* series. Note the hand painted flowers and the textural quality created by different kind of stitches.
Figure 3.4 *Kimono as Art* parade float for the 2008 Professional Football Hall of Fame parade, Canton, Ohio, August 2, 2008.

Figure 3.5 Visitors to the exhibition entered through a torii gate into the Great Court of the Cultural Center. The entrance to the museum is located off of the Great Court. Photo used with permission of Erica Hudson Pai, 2009.
Figure 3.6 Wayfinding signage featuring a young Japanese girl, used throughout the museum.

Figure 3.7 The Japanese Tea House temporarily constructed inside the museum's courtyard.
Museum Courtyard
(Location of Tea House)

Storage and Workshop Areas

Visitor's Desk

Entrance to Galleries

Schneider Gallery 34' x 33'

Timken Gallery 30' x 33'

Fry Gallery 45' x 33'

Educational Gallery

Michigan Gallery

Preyer Gallery 75' x 33'

Symphony of Light Installation

Langebach Gallery 45' x 33'

Great Court Area

3.8 Canton Museum of Art Gallery Map
Figure 3.9 Jacqueline Quirk prepares for her role as Cio-Cio-San in *Madame Butterfly*. 

Figure 3.10 The "Kimono-inspired" Midori Fashion Show at the Massillon Museum of Art. Styles of dress modeled after Chinese *cheongsam* or a combination of Asian styles of dress showed a conflation of Asian cultures, which sometimes occurred throughout *Kimono as Art* auxiliary events.
Figure 3.11 Meliko the Geisha Girl performed at the Canton Museum of Art during the *Kimono as Art* exhibition opening.
“Our community realized the significance of the amount of investment that the Japanese as a country have made in Ohio . . . one of the largest investments of any country. We thought that they should get a chance to show the culture as well as the individual artist.”

In the epigraph above, Ward “Jack” Timken, president of the Timken Foundation explained how the Kimono Leader Committee (KLC) wished to have the Japanese share their culture with the people of Canton through a number Japanese cultural events. In an effort to ensure cultural accuracy, the Kimono Leadership Committee attempted to recruit Japanese and Japanese Americans living in the area as consultants during the planning of the KimonoFest events. This was no easy task given the extremely small Japanese and Japanese American populations in Stark County. The KLC did find a few volunteers of Japanese descent who contributed to KimonoFest.

My interest in this chapter is in examining the relationship between the Japanese and Japanese American participants and the Kimono Leadership Committee, and the participants’ level of involvement in the planning of the KimonoFest events. How much control did they have over the portrayal of Japanese culture, how did they feel about the inclusion of certain events and how did they feel about the excitement over Japanese culture during Kimono as Art? I also examine questionable performances of Japanese culture, Japanese stereotypes, and tropes that were presented through the auxiliary events and look at how Japanese and Japanese American volunteers reacted to these portrayals.

I found it necessary to seek out Japanese and Japanese Americans who lived in nearby counties and cities to Canton because of the small number of Japanese and Japanese American residents living in Stark County. It should be noted that I found out

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1 The 2012 study of Asian American population distribution by the Pew Research Center showed that there were 294 Japanese Americans living within the Stark County area (according to the 2010 census numbers). This figure also includes mixed race individuals. Japanese Americans were one of the smallest Asian American groups accounted for in Stark County – the smallest population was Vietnamese Americans with 245 individuals living in Stark County. “The Rise of Asian Americans,” Pew Research Center website, 2012, http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/asianamericans-maps/.
there were two distinct groups of Japanese (vs. Japanese American) residents. One group consisted of Japan-born, long-term U.S. residents who had resided in Ohio for over a decade but still identified as "Japanese" (even after becoming a U.S. citizen). The other Japanese residents were citizens of Japan who temporarily relocated to Canton to fulfill job assignments, usually only staying for one or two years. The long-term Japanese residents I spoke to saw themselves as very different from the short-term resident Japanese and indicated that the two groups never socialized. Throughout this chapter, unless otherwise noted, my use of "Japanese" refers specifically to the Japanese long-term residents since the short-term resident Japanese were not involved in *Kimono as Art* or any of the affiliated events.

I spent my formative years in Stark County, in several small cities just outside of the Canton city limits. While growing up in the area I saw very few Asians or Asian Americans. Additionally, I witnessed hostility and racism towards Asians and Asian Americans. I would even speculate that there was often more hostility towards Asian Americans (in comparison to foreign-born Asians) because many Americans misunderstood the idea of the "Asian American citizen." The idea of the Asian American citizen—a label that is in itself unknown to most Stark County residents—seemed hard to reconcile in the minds of non-Asians.

In present day Canton, hostility towards Asians, and by extension Asian Americans, is still evident as numerous residents face layoffs with the closure of large manufacturing companies, many which have outsourced jobs and labor to Asia. Because of this, Asia is seen as a threat to the city’s economy and as partially responsible for the decline of its prosperity. A sizable portion of the population of Canton and Stark County are veterans of the 20th century U.S. wars in Asia. Nearly every person I knew in Stark

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2 I lived in East Canton (a small working class town outside of Canton) and attended primary and secondary school in Louisville (a middle class white suburb outside of Canton, adjacent to East Canton, and often noted for its lack of diversity with a population of 98.3% white). See the U.S. Census Bureau’s Fact Finder for demographics from the 2010 U.S. Census: [http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tables-services/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=DEC_10_DP_DPDP1&prodType=table](http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tables-services/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=DEC_10_DP_DPDP1&prodType=table)

3 The demographic within the Canton city limits is a mix of white and black residents. In the areas surrounding the city of Canton, the population is predominantly white.

4 The comments sections of articles on the Canton Repository’s website reveal this. One only has to read an article about major manufacturing companies in Canton to find xenophobic comments about the migration of jobs to Asia.
County had a father, uncle, or grandfather who served in World War II, the Korean War, or the Vietnam War. I believe that Asian Americans in the Midwest were often the targets of hostility towards Asia because white Americans did not recognize them as any different from Asians.

Given the negative experiences I personally encountered as an Asian American living in the Canton area and the general hostilities towards Asians and Asian Americans I witnessed, I was amazed to learn about the overwhelmingly positive response to the Kimono as Art exhibition. During the time that I lived in Canton, Asian Americans living within the Canton/Stark County were largely invisible and marginalized, and certainly were not a subject of interest to a majority of the residents. When I heard about the excitement generated by Kimono as Art, I wondered what had changed in the years since I left the city that made the people of Canton eager to learn about an Asian culture.

I was able to find the names of prominent Japanese and Japanese American participants who were mentioned in news articles about the exhibition and related events. Within the Canton and Stark County area, I found that all of the participants I spoke with identified as Japanese, not as Japanese American. This was because all of the participants I found in Stark County were born in Japan and later moved to the U.S. Of these participants, all of them were still citizens of Japan; only one had become a U.S. citizen. They each explained that Canton did not have a “Japanese community.” However, I will refer to the Canton/Stark County Japanese residents as a community, despite the fact that they did not view themselves as a communal group. I found there were many similarities among the Japanese residents in Canton – all of them were women, all of them were married to white men, and each had lived in the Canton, Ohio for over a decade.

I tried to determine how the Japanese and Japanese American volunteers became involved with the exhibition and received mixed responses. Robb Hankins of ArtsinStark said there were hardly any Japanese in the area and admitted that they had difficulty

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5 Veterans account for nearly 8.80% of the Stark County population based on 2010 census figures. (U.S. Census Bureau Canton, Stark County Quick Facts. http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/39/3912000.html. U.S. Census Bureau website.) My mother, who worked in an assisted living facility for over twenty years, recounted many stories of resident veterans using abusive and racist language towards her.
finding Japanese and Japanese Americans to participate.\textsuperscript{6} In our interview, M.J. Albacete stated that many Japanese came forward and offered to volunteer, although he did not give a specific number of how many Japanese volunteered.\textsuperscript{7}

The first volunteer of Japanese descent contacted by the Kimono Leadership Committee (KLC) and asked to assist with the exhibition was Kumi Day, the Japan-born woman who had become a U.S. citizen. Day told me that Jane Timken contacted her directly and asked her to serve as a Japanese culture consultant during the planning stages. It was not clear how Timken learned of Day and decided to ask her to participate. Another Japanese volunteer, Toshie Kenney, stated that a friend had emailed her information about the exhibition so she approached the museum and offered to volunteer. According to Japanese resident and Mount Union College professor, Naoko Oyabu-Mathis, she offered to assist with events and activities, but was never contacted and asked to volunteer beyond her assistance with the \textit{Kimono as Art} reception at Mount Union.

The Sho-Jo-Ji Japanese dance troupe performed routinely at several festivals throughout the state and offered their services through the Cleveland Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) website which was noted by someone on the KLC. They were contacted directly and asked to perform throughout the run of \textit{Kimono as Art}. They were also asked to participate in an educational workshop on Japanese culture organized for Stark County public school teachers.

\textbf{Japanese or Japanese American?}

Although \textit{Kimono as Art} was intended to educate the community about Japanese culture specifically, there were several attempts at connecting the \textit{Japanese American} experience to the exhibition. Only a few participants--members of the Sho-Jo-Ji dance troupe, author Monica Sone, and actor George Takei--identified as Japanese American. The term “Japanese American” was never used in reviews and news articles about events that focused on specifically Japanese American issues and experiences. In articles that appeared in newspapers across Ohio written about author Monica Sone, artist Toshiko Takaæzu, and the Sho-Jo-Ji dancers they were never referred to as “Japanese

\textsuperscript{6} Robb Hankins, CEO, ArtsinStark, Interview with Author, March 29, 2010.
\textsuperscript{7} M.J. Albacete, Director, Canton Museum of Art, Interview with Author, March 25, 2010.
Americans." Exhibition organizers and local journalists never referred to "Japanese American Internment," only "Japanese Internment." In the *Kimono as Art* related materials and ephemera I collected, there was only one instance where I found the term "Japanese American" used. It was in reference to George Takei and the talk he gave at the Cultural Center.

In interviews, I asked Japanese American participants how they felt about the attempt to connect Japanese American culture to *Kimono as Art*. Beverly Kerecman, a Japanese American woman and leader of the Sho-Jo-Ji dance troupe admitted, "I'm not sure Japanese American culture had that much to do with this occasion [*Kimono as Art*]."

When I asked non-Japanese participants about the inclusion of the Japanese American history, I notice that they usually did not engage in the question, perhaps uncertain of what I was asking them or unclear as to what constituted Japanese American history.

In my estimation, the avoidance of the term "Japanese American" in writings about the events involving Japanese Americans encouraged audiences to believe that Japanese and Japanese Americans were indistinguishable and undoubtedly reinforced the idea that Asian Americans are always "foreigners." That the KLC did not distinguish between things that were specifically Japanese American in contrast to things that were Japanese probably indicates that they were unaware that the distinction could or needed to be made. This problem is further compounded by the fact that discussions about

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9 We could further analyze the use of term "internment" camps rather than "concentration" camps by the KLC. However, Sone, who was the first Japanese American to speak in Canton regarding WWII Japanese American Internment, used the term "internment" rather than "concentration," as well. Sone's text, *Nisei Daughter*, has been written about a number of times and accused of being too blase about the internment of Japanese Americans. However, other scholars argue that Sone's language was strategic rather than naive—that she intentionally wrote a less critical narrative because of the chilly post-war Japanese-American relations when her book was published (1953). Asian American scholar Lisa Lowe wrote about *Nisei Daughter* in "Canon, Institutionalization, Identity," from *Immigrant Acts* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1996). Warren D. Hoffman wrote about the differing analyses of *Nisei Daughter* in "Home, Memory, and Narrative in Monica Sone's *Nisei Daughter*," in *Recovered Legacies: Authority and Identity in Early Asian American Literature* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005).

10 "The Players Guild Theatre to Host World-Renown Actor George Takei," *Players Guild Theatre Press Release*, Canton, Ohio, February 29, 2009. Takei has become well known in the Asian American community for his emphasis on discussing the treatment and internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. However, I should also note that the two articles that appeared in the *Canton Repository* about Takei's talk mainly emphasized his role in the television show, *Star Trek.*
Japanese American history occurred in the middle of what was supposed to be a “celebration of Japanese culture.” There was no attempt to acknowledge Japanese Americans as sharing in the American experience, instead they were either asked to talk about their exclusion from American culture (as in the internment experience) or share their “Japanese-ness” with non-Japanese.

There was an assumption that Japanese Americans were inherently experts on Japanese culture, even though they were many generations removed from the home country of their ethnicity. In fact, it was the assumption that Japanese Americans were more Japanese than American that led to the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II. Because of this problem, Dorinne Kondo laments that Asian Americans have historically been forced to “deny there might be connections . . . to their nations of origins,” in order to be recognized as “American” in her book, About Face.¹¹

Perhaps, it is understandable that most non-Japanese from Stark County, Ohio would not be familiar with the term “Asian American.” The term “Japanese American” or “Asian American” is not part of the average Stark County resident’s vocabulary. I would even argue that because the term “Asian American” (or Japanese American) does not exist for most Stark County residents, the subject-position of an Asian American—a person of Asian ethnic descent that shares in a specifically American experience—does not exist for them either.

Interestingly enough, Asian American residents of this area did not use the term to describe themselves. Asian Americans, including those who were biracial or mixed race, generally identified themselves by their Asian country of origin. Perhaps, Asian Americans did not identify as Asian American (only as Asian) because of the constant reinforcement by non-Asians that they were only (or foremostly) Asian and not (white) American. In a cyclical paradox, perhaps white Americans could not identify Asian Americans as “Asian American” because Asian Americans did not identify themselves as “Asian Americans.” This allowed non-Asians to maintain their assumption that those of Asian descent are always foreign and not American.

It seemed that some Asian Americans in the area also envisioned themselves as “forever foreigners.” Scholar Min Zhou points out that second generation (and third,

fourth, etc.) Asian Americans are less optimistic than their parents about being seen as anything but Asian. Zhou quotes a Chinese American woman who stated, "... no matter how American you think you are or try to be, if you have almond-shaped eyes, straight black hair, and yellow complexion, you are a foreigner by default ... you will never become accepted as white." Asian Americans in Ohio may have internalized this thinking.12

Japanese and Japanese Americans Participants

Seeking out the Japanese and Japanese American participants to interview was somewhat difficult given their small numbers, but I was able to talk to seven women of Japanese descent who were prominently involved with *Kimono as Art* in some capacity. As previously explained, the seven women I spoke to could be separated into two distinct subgroups. The first group consisted of Japan-born long-term U.S. residents who had lived in the Northeast Ohio area for at least ten years or more. All of these women, including Day who became a U.S. citizen in 1995, identified as "Japanese." The second group of women I interviewed consisted of second (Nisei) and third (Sansei) generation Japanese American women whose families had lived in the U.S. for several generations and settled in Ohio after their release from internment camps.

Of the four women that I would categorize in the first group, I was able to interview two of them in person, Kumi Day and Toshie Kenney. Day, a Japanese woman in her mid-forties, had lived in Ohio with her husband, a white American man, for over twelve years. Day became the go-to Japanese cultural consultant for *Kimono as Art*. It was not clear why Day was specifically sought out by Jane Timken and asked to volunteer, but Day indicated that a mutual acquaintance put them in contact. Day at times sounded exasperated by her role in the *Kimono as Art* and *KimonoFest* planning, as she was repeatedly called upon to assist with choosing appropriate decorative elements for

13 Although I spoke to only a handful of Japanese Americans, some of my knowledge of the use of the term "Asian American" in this area comes from my interactions with the Korean American community. The Korean American community in Canton is made of up of mostly first generation Korean American women who were "war brides," — all married to white men. Their biracial children often identify themselves as "Korean" or "half-Korean," with no "American" connection made. I should also note that this community did not form until I had already left Ohio and has only begun to develop within the last decade.
events and the Cultural Center, to either model kimono or give kimono dressing demonstrations at events, and to perform tea ceremony on numerous occasions, not only during the run of the exhibition, but also in the months leading up to it. At Hankins' request, she even taught his wife how to properly dress in kimono, coming to their house numerous times over the months prior to the arrival of *Kimono as Art* to practice with her.

Day introduced me to Toshie Kenney, a Japanese woman in her mid to late thirties, married to an American man. She had come to Ohio as an exchange student to attend Kent State University. Kenney enjoyed living in Ohio and as a result had remained in the state for over a decade. Kenney volunteered for *Kimono as Art* after hearing about the exhibition from one of her non-Japanese friends. She was less involved in the planning and logistical aspects of *Kimono as Art*, and mainly served as a volunteer to assist Day with kimono dressing and tea ceremony.

The other two women I corresponded with via email. Both of these women were professors at nearby colleges and both had come to the area as university exchange students and then remained in Ohio. Dr. Naoko Oyabu-Mathis a resident of Ohio for over thirty-six years, lived in Summit County, the adjacent county north of Stark County (Akron is the major city there). She worked in Stark County at Mount Union College. The other woman, who wished to remain anonymous, lived in Stark County for over twenty years. These two women were not involved with the planning process for *Kimono as Art* and *KimonoFest*. Oyabu-Mathis told me that she wanted to volunteer for some events but either because she was too busy at the time or she was never contacted, she did not end up helping out at any of the events. She was involved with a *Kimono as Art* promotional reception that was held at Mount Union College in fall 2008 for which she suggested cultural activities and helped recruit Japanese students to assist at the reception.\(^{14}\)

All of these women identified as Japanese, yet all confessed that they did not see themselves as entirely Japanese either, in comparison to Japanese nationals.\(^{15}\) Day and Kenney tried to explain the ambiguity that they felt over their Japanese/Japanese American identity. They told me, for example, about Japanese men and women who

\[^{14}\text{Naoko Oyabu-Mathis, Professor, Mount Union College, Email correspondence, September 16, 2012.}\]

\[^{15}\]
would temporarily relocate to Canton for a brief period of time. The men were usually employees of the Timken Company and would be sent by the company to live in Canton for one to two years while doing work for the company.

Day and Kenney explicitly stated that they felt they were different from the Japanese women who transferred to Canton with their husbands and generally did not socialize with them. Day stated, "I feel odd [sic] for them . . . they just know Japanese language . . ." Kenney explained her feelings further by describing the Japanese nationals in Canton as "very Japanese," and explaining that she had left Japan because she did not like living there.16 Both Day and Kenney said that while they wished to retain elements of Japanese culture, they did not want to "hang out with Japanese people all the time."17 In an interesting statement that further demonstrated the complexity of these women's identities, Day admitted, "I don't really miss [it] that much—being Japanese."

Oyabu-Mathis also raised the subject of the Japanese nationals who came to Ohio temporarily on work assignments in one of her emails. Her explanation for not interacting with them was that it was socio-economic, rather than because of their comparative "Japanese-ness." She explained that the men usually occupied high-level positions within their respective companies, were paid very well, and lived in exclusive neighborhoods. She indicated they were very aware of their upper class status and thus “did not mix” with the other “Japanese” living in the area.18

However, the women I spoke with (Day, Kenney, Oyabu-Mathis) did not associate with multigenerational Japanese Americans either. This may have been because there were no Japanese American organizations or a thriving Japanese American community in Canton at the time. Oyabu-Mathis said that she had never felt a sense of belonging to a Japanese or Japanese-American community throughout all her years of living in Ohio. Both Day and Kenney seemed unaffected by their isolation and both said they did not feel as though they needed or craved a Japanese community. Oyabu-Mathis confirmed this by stating "I don’t sense . . . that many Japanese living in this region feel the desire or need to come together as [a] community." However, despite their claims that they were not interested in having a Japanese community in Canton, I got the sense

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18 Oyabu-Mathis, Email correspondence, September 16, 2012.
that Day and Kenney, who befriended each other through *Kimono as Art*, subsequently appreciated having each other’s company. They did not know each other, or any other Japanese in the community prior to the exhibition. Day admitted, “I guess it is nice to have a friend that is similar... we get together, talk, eat Japanese food...”

Day and Kenney described to me their experiences of racism while living in Ohio. Kenney stated, “I feel... ‘normal’... not different... but maybe they don’t see me that way?” She said at times she felt that some of her professors at Kent State had been, in her words, “prejudiced.” Day told me a few stories of her encounters with blatant racism, especially when she first arrived in Ohio. She was very upset when one of her daughters came home from school one day and told her that a classmate had called her a “Jap.” Her daughter asked Day what the slur meant because she did not know.

In response to the racism that she and her daughters had experienced, Day felt it was her duty to volunteer at her daughters’ schools as much as possible in order to show the predominantly non-Japanese students that Japanese people were a part of their community and to help teach them about Japanese culture and people. Day felt it was very important to try to make personal connections with people, so that they could then walk away from the experience feeling positive and would then hopefully be more open-minded in their future encounters with other Asians and Asian Americans. This was also part of her reason for assisting with *Kimono as Art*. Day wanted to educate visitors on Japanese culture and also show Canton residents that Japanese people were a part of the community in which they lived. Day said that throughout her participation in *Kimono as Art*, whether showing how to put on a kimono or demonstrating the tea ceremony, she wanted to emphasize to the non-Japanese audience, that everything that Japanese people did (in cultural practice) had a reason behind it and that nothing was arbitrary.

The Japanese American group of women I interviewed were all part of the Cleveland-based Sho-Jo-Ji Japanese dance troupe. Two of the women, Beverly Kerecman and Nanci Taketa, were Sansei (third) generation Japanese Americans. Kerecman, a woman in her mid-fifties, was the lead instructor for the Sho-Jo-Ji dance troupe. She had been involved with the troop since she was a child. Taketa, who was also in her early to

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19 Day had met her husband, who was in the U.S. military, in Japan and later moved to Ohio to be with him.
mid fifties, was an assistant to Kerecman and helped out in the studio with classes and occasionally performed with the group.

These women were daughters of Japanese Americans interned during WWII. Their grandparents and parents settled in Ohio after their release from internment camps. When asked why their families chose to move to Ohio, Kerecman explained that they were allowed to leave the camps sooner if they went to Ohio. Families who wished to return to California (where Kerecman’s family lived prior to internment) had to remain in the camps longer. Because of this, a number of Japanese American families settled in Cleveland after WWII, so Kerecman and Taketa grew up within a small, but supportive Japanese American community.

The other woman, who Kerecman had invited to the interview, was Pam Souza, a biracial Nisei woman in her mid-forties. Souza’s experience was quite different from the Sansei women. Her mother was a “war bride,” and her father had been in the U.S. military she explained. They had settled in Cleveland during the late sixties. Upon their initial move to Ohio, Souza’s mother was disconnected from the Japanese American community there. At one point during her childhood, Souza recalled her mother taking her to see the Sho-Jo-Ji dancers perform. After the performance her mother talked with the Sho-Jo-Ji troupe leaders at the time and Souza began taking lessons and performing with them just a few years later. She admitted her experience of growing up biracial in the early seventies, at a time when miscegenation was still frowned upon, was difficult. As a biracial Asian American, Souza seemed ambivalent about her ethnic identity. When asked about how she identified, she answered, “I guess, Japanese American,” and when I asked what generation of Japanese American she belonged to, she looked uncertainly at the other women in the group before answering, “I guess I would be Nisei?” Souza explained that she enjoyed dancing with Sho-Jo-Ji troupe because she wanted to gain some sort of sense of her “Japanese side.”

The dance troupe, established in 1956, was affiliated with the Cleveland chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League. Kerecman and Taketa, who began dancing with the troupe when they were very young, had both been with the troupe for nearly forty years. They grew up in a small but active Japanese American community. Kerecman mentioned that there had been various community groups and clubs within the
While they acknowledged that they had been subjected to racism when they were younger, they felt comforted by having Japanese American friends who shared similar experiences. They regretted the loss of the sense of community they had when they were growing up and felt that the current Japanese American community was not as strong or as cohesive as it once was. When asked, all of the women replied that they had no personal ties to any extended family in Japan, and none of them could speak Japanese.

I should also note that all of these women, Japanese and Japanese American, were married or previously married to white American men. They all had biracial or multiracial children (with the exception of Kenney who had no children) and all, with the exception of Day, expressed disappointment that their children were not interested in learning about Japanese culture. From what the women told me, I had the sense that the children of the Japanese American women, who had grown up in a supportive albeit small, Japanese American community, seemed to have the least interest in learning about Japanese and Japanese American culture and history. On the other hand, Day indicated that her children, who were growing up in an area where there was no Japanese American community and few other Asian Americans, were the most interested in learning about the culture. Day was pleased that her children were interested in the *Kimono as Art* events and participated in the tea ceremony demonstrations alongside her. She explained that she was glad that they were able to experience the exhibition and events and “show off” their culture to their classmates. She felt that the excitement generated by *Kimono as Art* gave them more confidence and allowed them to be proud of their Japanese heritage.

Likewise, all of the women, Japanese and Japanese American, were pleased to see the *Kimono as Art* exhibition come to Ohio. Prior to *Kimono as Art*, they had not seen any museum exhibitions in Northeast Ohio focused on Asian art or culture. Both groups of women expressed a sense of duty to teach others about Japanese culture, especially since they lived in a place where there were few Japanese and Japanese Americans and where non-Asians had many misconceptions about Asians and Asian Americans.

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20 Kerecman pointed out that there had been a sewing group, golf club, bowling club, and many other groups, which helped establish a strong sense of community among the Cleveland Japanese Americans. Beverly Kerecman, Director, Sho-Jo-Ji Japanese Dance troupe, Interview with author, March 31, 2010.
Japanese/American Culture

In the early planning stages of the *KimonoFest* events, Day became the primary Japanese consultant who worked on event planning. Day offered some suggestions on ideas for events, explaining that when she first began working with the Kimono Leadership Committee they had no idea what to do and had come up with a list of what she called “very typical Japanese things for Americans.” She provided them with some suggestions, but for the most part the non-Japanese organizers were responsible for creating the schedule of the events. They would run details by Day to be sure that what they wanted to do was appropriate to Japanese culture.

As mentioned earlier, the Sho-Jo-Ji dance troupe leaders, Kerecman and Taketa, were responsible for creating two K-12 teacher workshops on aspects of Japanese culture that were to be held a few months before the exhibition opened. They decided to give a demonstration and explanation of Japanese dance elements and then demonstrate how to put on a kimono. Unfortunately, they were only able to hold one workshop as the other was cancelled due to inclement weather. They also explained that they had control of what and how they would perform throughout *Kimono as Art*, although they did follow the suggestions of the KLC organizers to cater their performance based on the type of event (i.e. to offer formal performances for formal events; to encourage audience participation at non-formal events). Other Japanese/Japanese American volunteers, like Kenney, were not involved in any aspect of the planning process, but eventually assisted with events.

It is interesting to look at the different aspects of Japanese culture each group shared and the ways in which these aspects were presented to the audience. For example, the juxtaposition between Day’s tea ceremony “performances” and Sho-Jo-Ji’s Japanese dance performances may seem odd given that they are entirely different aspects of Japanese culture. However, they both had a performative aspect and only women participated in the performances during the *Kimono as Art* exhibition.

Day’s tea ceremony performances appeared more “Japanese.” Her presentation of a traditional Japanese tea ceremony became the symbolic embodiment of Japanese culture during *Kimono as Art*. The tea ceremony performances were very visible and

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heavily promoted by ArtsinStark and the Canton Museum of Art. Numerous photographs of Day performing the tea ceremony were printed in the local newspaper during the exhibition run. Day not only did tea ceremony demonstrations in the temporary teahouse at the Canton Museum of Art over several weekends, but was also asked to perform at several other venues as well—on stage prior to the Midori Fashion Show at the Massillon Museum of Art and at a local library branch.

Day, who had learned and practiced tea ceremony for nearly a decade in Japan, performed a tea ceremony as “traditional” and free of any “frills.” Day fought with organizers to make sure the performance and experience for the participants was as authentic as possible. She refused to have music playing when it was suggested by the KLC that background music accompany the ceremony. The teahouse constructed inside the museum’s courtyard was modestly decorated. The kimonos worn by Day and the other volunteers, although decorated with elegant floral designs, were constructed from muted fabrics and were neutral in color. In a sense, nothing stood out during the tea ceremony. The performers, the performances, and the setting all came together in a cohesive but understated manner. There was no evidence of an Orientalized performance of Japanese culture by Day or others involved with the tea ceremony.

In comparison, I believe that the Nihon buyo, or Japanese classical dances preformed by Sho-Jo-Ji dance troupe were “Japanese American.” In other words, over time these dances most likely evolved into a style of dance that deviated from the traditional Japanese dances from which they originated and thus became “Japanese American dances.” The Sho-Jo-Ji dances were performative but I feel they were less focused on the specifics of Japanese dance. To clarify, it appeared that the Sho-Jo-Ji dancers’ primary concern was performing for an audience – the nuances and intricacies found in the execution of Japanese dance were not of primary concern. The choreography was slightly rough and dancers’ movements were less refined in comparison to other traditional Nihon buyo I have watched. The dancers were often out of sync with one another and their performances seemed “informal.”

22 A simple search of “Sho-Jo-Ji dancers” on YouTube.com will bring up several videos of the troupe performing.
The Sho-Jo-Ji troupe was originally formed with dancers of differing Japanese dance backgrounds. The result was what they call an “eclectic blend” of styles derived from Japanese classical dances dating from the mid 19th century\(^23\) and influenced by Noh drama and Kabuki theatre. The Sho-Jo-Ji dances performed at the time of *Kimono as Art* were several generations removed from the dancers who originally brought the dances from Japan. The Sansei and Yonsei generations were and are disconnected from the source of the dances and may not have known how the original dances would have been performed. It is likely that the dances changed over the years while being passed from one dancer to the next, with each dancer adding or eliminating elements from the original choreography.

Many of the dancers that participate in the Sho-Jo-Ji performances are young children and teenagers—the children of Japanese American and Japanese parents. This also may account for the lack of enthusiasm that was evident in their performances or for the sometimes-poor execution. The Sho-Jo-Ji dancers did not aspire to become professional dancers. Like longtime Sho-Jo-Ji dancer Pam Souza, they participated and took classes with Sho-Jo-Ji in order to establish some sort of “connection” with their Japanese heritage. For these Japanese American children, it may have been the only Japanese cultural practice in which they could participate.

Another factor that affected the Sho-Jo-Ji dancers and their dances may have been that they generally performed for non-Japanese audiences. The dancers could afford to be less precise in their execution of the dances, because their audiences would have no prior performances to which to compare them. Also, I suspect that the dances may have been embellished to appeal to these audiences. The dancers’ coordinated brightly colored costumes and eye-catching props seemed to be strategically selected. When several dancers were on stage together in their red or purple floral patterned kimonos, they stood out significantly. When looked at alongside the tea ceremony the Sho-Jo-Ji troupe’s performances with their brightly colored clothing, exaggerated movements, and sometimes-clumsy execution presented an entirely different aesthetic view of Japanese culture.

I speculate that the dances performed by the Sho-Jo-Ji troupe fulfilled the audience's expectation of how Japanese dance should look and perhaps were even the product of the Sho-Jo-Ji dancers' own expectations of how Japanese classical dance should look. Changes in dance execution and performances over the years are a common progression in any dance practice and derivative or newly developed styles are natural occurrences. The Sho-Jo-Ji dances, because of their separation from their place of origin, coupled with the expectations of non-Japanese viewing audience have undoubtedly shaped their appearances. As a result, the Sho-Jo-Ji dances have evolved into what might more accurately be labeled as Japanese American dances. I do not feel that the Japanese American dances are any less authentic, in the sense that they are an authentic manifestation of Japanese dance that has been appropriated for use in a Japanese American community.24

There were no direct collaborative efforts between the Japanese and Japanese Americans throughout the Kimono as Art related events. Throughout my interviews and correspondence with the Japanese women they never mentioned the performances by the Sho-Jo-Ji troupe or acknowledged the participation of Japanese Americans in Kimono as Art. This may have been an oversight because of the time lapse between the exhibition and when I conducted the interviews one year later or because I did not ask them specifically what they thought about the Sho-Jo-Ji performances. The Japanese American women however mentioned the Japanese women a number of times, usually in a self-conscious manner. It seemed as though they expected the Japanese to be critical of their performances. When I brought up the idea of non-Japanese people wearing kimono Taketa paused for a minute and then answered, "Oh, they [meaning Day and Kenney] probably thought we looked terrible in our kimonos—you know? Because we're Japanese American."25

This in itself indicates that the Sho-Jo-Ji dancers were cognizant of the differences between the Japanese and Japanese Americans that would have been visible to the Japanese, but not to non-Japanese. The Japanese American women assumed a position of

24 Although outside the scope of this project, I think further analysis of the way in which Japanese American dance has evolved from classical Japanese dance would make for an interesting case study.
25 Nanci Taketa, Member of the Sho-Jo-Ji Japanese Dance troupe, Interview with Author, March 31, 2010.
authority on Japanese culture when no Japanese were around, but immediately became self-conscious in the presence of Japanese nationals and disavowed an cultural authority.

Same Old Tropes

Many Asians and Asian Americans find themselves subjected to two gendered tropes. The first is that of the exotic, highly sexualized female while her male counterpart is the male sexual deviant who is perceived as a threat to white women. The second trope is that of the docile, submissive Asian female while her male counterpart is the ineffectual, effeminated male. Manifestations of this second trope were replicated throughout *Kimono as Art* events. Cio-Cio-San, who appeared in the performance of *Madame Butterfly*, was the epitome of the submissive Japanese woman with suicidal proclivities, longing for the approval of a white American male. The tea ceremony, while culturally appropriate, still made the Japanese female participant appear to docile, quiet, and submissive. The exhibition wayfinding signage featured a young Japanese girl peaking out cooly from under her parasol. The Japanese female figure was highly visible during *Kimono as Art*.

The only Asian males visible throughout *Kimono as Art* were Kubota (an artist, considered a “genius” and thus freed from the usual critical gaze of the non-Japanese audience or effeminated for working with kimonos which are generally worn by women), Kubota’s son, Satoshi (an extension of the artist, Itchiku Kubota), and George Takei (gay, thus non-threatening and possibly even effeminized by the audience in a geographical region of the U.S. that lacks not only an Asian American community, but also a visible LGBT community). All of the Japanese and Japanese American volunteers and participants that I am aware of were female, and all of them married (or divorced, but formerly married) to white American men. The near absence of Japanese men and the presence of the white American husbands of the Japanese and Japanese American women (in place of Japanese men), reinforced the American Orientalist idea of a perceived binary between Asian men and white men in which white masculinity is portrayed as

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26 There were the male participants in the sumo wrestling demonstration, but I have omitted them from this analysis, as neither of the participants was of Japanese ethnicity. Both sumo wrestlers, Ulambayar Byambajav and Tamir Dolgormaa, were originally from Mongolia. On the other hand, this may have been unknown to most of the viewers who may have assumed the wrestlers were Japanese.

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superior and dominant to Asian masculinity. To a white, Midwestern Ohio audience, Japanese and Japanese American women could be seen as real life versions of Cio-Cio-San, demonstrating the Orientalist idea that Japanese women prefer white men over Japanese men.\(^7\)

At one point when interviewed for an article in the local newspaper, Joy Timken mentioned how surprised she was by how closely people were studying the kimonos, in particular, she said, “I was especially impressed at the reaction men had to the exhibit. They were really studying everything.”\(^28\) While she did not state it explicitly, we can assume that the men that Timken mentioned were white men. I am not entirely sure what Timken meant by her comment, but she reveals a gendered bias that implies white men are not usually interested in art or museum exhibitions. Since a male artist created the kimonos, why was the male reaction to them surprising for Timken? Perhaps Timken was surprised that white Midwestern males, typically the embodiment of American hypermasculinity, would be interested in something that was perceived to be feminine in nature. But why was it unsurprising that an Asian male created these “feminine” works? Why was one male’s interest surprising and not the other’s?

Again, we see a number of binary relationships surface—Asian male versus white male; East versus West; feminine versus masculine—demonstrated throughout *Kimono as Art*. The Japanese woman became the symbol and expert of Japanese culture throughout *Kimono as Art*, perhaps because they were perceived as more palatable and less threatening for a non-Japanese audience. The cultural aspects of Japan shown throughout *Kimono as Art*, whether accurate or inaccurate, generally expressed a feminized nature of Japanese culture such as in the tea ceremony, Japanese dances (with only female dancers), *Madame Butterfly*, ikebana practice, even in Kubota’s kimonos (given that kimonos are only worn by women). Japanese culture was feminized for the Canton audience.


Popularity of *Kimono as Art*

I asked all of the “Japanese” and Japanese American women why they thought *Kimono as Art* and the auxiliary events were so popular with a predominantly non-Japanese audience. Their responses varied, but they all mentioned ArtsinStark’s marketing campaign. Kerecman and Taketa told me that when they were contacted a year in advance of the exhibition, and were shown printed materials (press packets) for *Kimono as Art*. They were amazed that the KLC had printed materials for the exhibition already prepared. Kerecman also mentioned that she was surprised to hear family and friends from Cleveland talk about the exhibition. “We never hear of anything from Canton,” she told me.

Kerecman and Taketa also thought that many people were interested in learning about cultures different from their own. They mentioned the recent popularity of the book, *Memoirs of a Geisha*, and the adapted film released in 2005. The book and film, a work of fiction that details the life of a geisha in a way that is highly sexualized, became very popular with non-Japanese women. Kerecman admitted, “I think Americans are curious about geisha culture.” Kerecman added that she thought most visitors to the exhibition, however, were genuinely seeking cultural experiences on a “higher level.”

Another suggestion, mentioned by both the Japanese and Japanese American women, was the popularity of manga. Kenney explained to me she discovered that several of the local libraries had “manga clubs.” Day, Kenney, and Oyabu-Mathis also brought up the growing popularity of Japanese popular culture and trends in the U.S. Day’s response was, “I think they want to be different . . . they wear shirts with Japanese writing . . . it doesn’t really mean anything [to] me, for the kids wearing [it], it’s something cool, something different.”

Day’s response that American youth adopt Japanese cultural symbols to be “different,” aligns with Sunaina Maira’s analysis on the appropriation of Asian symbols in the “Rave” youth subculture. Maira specifically looks at the use of South Asian symbols and images, however, perhaps we can use her study to understand the use of Japanese or other Asian symbols and images. She states that for many white American

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youth, the adoption of "Asian icons are often used by white (or other) American youth to signal their 'alternative' approach to mainstream popular culture."\textsuperscript{30}

Similarly, Mari Yoshihara explains that turn of the century Americans embraced Asian culture because they believed doing so would make them appear to be more cultured and refined.\textsuperscript{31} Although, Yoshihara is specifically referring to American Orientalist ideas at the end of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century/early 20\textsuperscript{th} century, we might hypothesize that a similar attitude was evident in Canton in the early 21\textsuperscript{st} century. This is evident with Albacete and the CMA. Their stated intent throughout \textit{Kimono as Art} was to expose people to Japanese culture and art and in effect, to "culture" them. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the idea of "high culture" became so important to Albacete et al. that cultural authenticity was often left by the wayside in favor of an inflated notion of what constituted "Japanese" culture. This was mainly self-serving because the CMA used \textit{Kimono as Art} as a way for the CMA and affiliated persons to appear cultured and refined to the community, and to those outside of Canton, and as part as an effort to counter the blue-collar, working class reputation so often attributed to the city by those living outside of it.

Both of these examples apply to different generations of white Americans, and Oyabu-Mathis noted that she believed that different generations of Americans had different reasons for their attraction to Japanese culture. In both cases—the utilization and appropriation of Asian cultural symbols, objects and icons served as an indicator of the person's intelligence, culture, and refinement. For white 19\textsuperscript{th} and early 20\textsuperscript{th} century American women and 21\textsuperscript{st} century white American youth, showing an interest in Asia made the individual believe that in the eyes of others they appeared to be "cosmopolitan" or "cool." \textit{Kimono as Art} was successful, in part, because it traded on white fascination with Asia.

Asian Conflation

I asked some of the Japanese and Japanese American women about their feelings regarding non-Japanese people dressing up as Japanese. All of the women said that they did not mind or care when non-Japanese people wore kimonos. “Anyone can wear kimono,” Day told me, “You don’t have to be Japanese to put the kimono on.”

Kerecman and Taketa did bring up one instance in which a local news reporter wore a kimono to the formal Opening Gala. This would not have normally bothered them, except that the way in which the female reporter wore the kimono was improper. Kerecman explained, “She was wearing the dress, kimono, not in the right way and that kind of bothered me—she had cleavage showing!” While non-Japanese donning kimonos did not typically offend both women, they were offended when it was worn in a way to look “sexy,” or “exotic.”

I asked Day and Kenney about their thoughts on the portrayals of Asians in The Mikado. Day waved her hand dismissively and replied, “That’s something American people do….” and wrote it off as something she would not even bother discussing. Kenney discussed a Kimono as Art event at which the Canton mayor’s wife, who is Chinese, dressed up in a kimono and sang Sakura. “I feel like it [was] kind of weird,” said Kenney about the performance.

All of the women I interviewed agreed that they were greatly bothered when non-Japanese people wore anything that seemed remotely Asian when they intended to dress up in “Japanese” style clothing. “They put chopsticks in [their] hair—we don’t do that!” Day complained. Kerecman from the Sho-Jo-Ji dance group felt similarly, explaining “That part sort of bothers me. Say we go to an Asian festival and it’s supposed to Japanese? They’ll come dressed in Chinese or something Asian, but not Japanese.” The conflation of Japanese culture with other Asian cultures was much more offensive to both the Japanese and Japanese American participants, than non-Japanese people performing as “Japanese.” As long as the latter was done respectfully and appropriately it was acceptable. (It should be noted that numerous images from Kimono as Art affiliated

33 Kerecman, Interview, March 31, 2010.
35 Kerecman, Interview, March 31, 2010.
events showed non-Japanese people wearing everything from Chinese cheongsam to stereotypical conical straw hats.)

It was not uncommon for non-Asians in the Midwest to conflate Asian cultures. In my personal experiences, there was often a lack of comprehension that Asian cultures were distinct from one another. In contrast, there seemed to be a need by Asian Americans living in the Midwest to distinguish themselves ethnically in reaction to this conflation. Some of this was probably because of cultural pride. For example, my Korean mother expressed no interest in viewing *Kimono as Art* because of the difficult history between Korea and Japan. However, many non-Asian friends and family assumed that because she was Asian, she would naturally be interested in the exhibition because kimonos were also Asian. It did not occur to them that kimonos were Japanese and that Japanese culture is very different from Korean culture. Likewise, the “Japanese” and Japanese American women seemed annoyed by the assumption that all Asian cultures were the same or interchangeable. This probably also accounts for Kenney’s discomfort with the mayor’s Chinese wife performing a Japanese song in a kimono – a performance which potentially led to more confusion for the non-Asian audience on the differences between different Asian cultures.

At one point, Day told me she had pointed out to one of the Kimono Leadership Committee volunteers that paper lanterns they had purchased to use as decorations were Chinese, not Japanese and further suggested that they should not use them for *Kimono as Art*. The volunteer flippantly responded, “Chinese, Japanese--what’s the difference?” Day, incensed by the woman’s response, fired back, “If you don’t want me to be here, I don’t have to come. I’m not paid to do this . . . If you want to know what’s authentic, that’s not it. If you don’t care, I don’t have to be here.”

Some KLC members were probably aware of the possibility of misidentifying authentic Japanese cultural elements or else they would not have sought out Day’s guidance. Other KLC members, however, seemed to think that determining what was culturally appropriate was unnecessary, perhaps because they felt the predominantly white audience would not be aware of the difference either way or because they were legitimately unaware of the differences between Asian cultures.
As mentioned earlier, during our interview Day expressed her frustration with organizers of *Kimono as Art*. She was asked to volunteer so that she could guide the KLC in making culturally appropriate decisions. Yet, some of the volunteers were unreceptive to Day’s suggestions. It seemed that some of the non-Japanese KLC members wanted to develop their events without consulting a cultural expert such as Day, even when it might prevent them from making culturally inappropriate decisions.

The Japanese and Japanese American volunteers and participants, like their non-Japanese Kimono Leadership Committee counterparts, also had specific ideas about the representation of Japanese culture. The cultural events that they presented may have been reflective of certain socio-economic groups or regional areas in Japan, but not representative of all Japan. Of course, I recognize the impossibility of any exhibition and events adequately representing the complexity of an entire culture and people. Oyabu-Mathis discussed the traditional nature of the events and explained, “... everyday [Japanese] lives do not necessarily include some of these very traditional parts of culture.”36 For example, not everyone in Japan participates in “tea ceremony,” and not everyone in Japan does ikebana (flower arrangement). I believe what Oyabu-Mathis was trying to allude here was that any emphasis on “traditional” culture practices over contemporary cultural activities in Japan, could reinforce stereotypical beliefs about Japan. These practices of a “traditional” nature potentially led observers to perceive Japan as a timeless, unchanging Asian country.

Fascination with Japanese culture greatly benefitted the museum and participating cultural organizations, and also offered a rare opportunity for Japanese and Japanese Americans to see Japanese culture to be recognized in a place where they are often marginalized. However, Japanese and Japanese American participants were asked to perform alongside Orientalized representations of Japanese “culture” (e.g. *Madame Butterfly*, *Meliko the Geisha Girl*, and *The Mikado*). Who is to say that the viewer did not perceive these culturally insensitive depictions of Japanese-ness as being accurate even when viewed beside more culturally appropriate depictions?

And while the ‘Japanese’ and Japanese American women’s participation in *Kimono as Art* and the affiliated events was successful in raising the profile of Japanese

36 Oyabu-Mathis, Email correspondence, September 16, 2012.
and Japanese Americans in the geographic area, there were a number of stereotypes and
tropes reified throughout *KimonoFest* and the other auxiliary events. The trope of the
defeminized Asian “forever foreigner” was reinforced in the eyes of the non-Japanese
audience because of the failure of the exhibitions and events to distinguish Japanese
American culture from Japanese culture, the use of stereotypical portrayals of Asian
female femininity coupled with the near absence of Japanese males, and the decision to
display “traditional” Japanese culture.

No exhibition can be perfect and satisfy all parties involved. It was encouraging
that the Kimono Leadership Committee took the initiative to find a Japanese cultural
representative. Yet, while the KLC claimed to support the Japanese and Japanese
Americans in representing their cultures, the KLC was reluctant to give them the freedom
to do whatever they thought was appropriate. In this sense, *Kimono as Art* and the
auxiliary events were molded by the desires and expectations of the non-Japanese
organizers.
Figure 4.1 Promotional photograph of Kumi Day performing tea ceremony.
Figure 4.2 White women, dressed in kimonos, participate in the tea ceremony exercise led by an unidentified Japanese woman in Western clothing.
Figure 4.3 Kumi Day, who became known as “the face of *Kimono as Art*,” was featured on the March 2009 cover of *About Stark County* Magazine.
Figure 4.4 Sho-Jo-Ji Japanese Dance troupe performing during *Kimono as Art*.

Figure 4.5 Japanese-themed *Art is Alive* event, *Kimono My House*, in which participating artists were encouraged to dress according to the theme.
Figure 4.6 Attendees at *Club New Fukasuki*, a Japanese “Harajuku-themed” event held at the Massillon Museum of Art.

Figure 4.7 Promotional image for *The Mikado*.
"A great exhibition at the Canton Museum of Art can be a much needed boon to our community. We now have the ‘secret’ formula and all we have to do is repeat it over and over again."

In the weeks after the close of *Kimono as Art*, several editorials appeared in the *Canton Repository* touting the economic success of the exhibition and calling for more arts programming of the same caliber in the future. An anonymously authored editorial appeared in the May 1, 2009 edition of the *Canton Repository* (the week after *Kimono as Art* ended) and outlined the many economic benefits from the exhibition. (It is likely ArtsinStark placed the editorial as it called for people to support their annual campaign.) In this editorial, it was pointed out that many people had come from out of state. Specifically mentioned was a group that had driven down from Vermont to view the exhibition. They had previously seen the Itchiku Kubota kimono exhibition at the Smithsonian’s Museum of Natural History in 1995, and wanted to see the works again.¹

One individual, whom I contacted for permission to use a photograph she had taken at the *Kimono as Art* exhibition, told me that she had driven from Chicago to see the exhibition (an approximate eight hour drive).² Robb Hankins and M.J. Albacete told several anecdotal stories about people who had traveled long distances to Canton to view the exhibition. The *Repository* editorial pointed out that the people who had traveled to Canton brought in new revenue—by spending money at Canton hotels, restaurants, bars, and shops. The article justified the support of the arts because the Canton arts organizations had shown, through *Kimono as Art*, that the arts had the ability to economically support the city.

Joy Timken also submitted an editorial to the *Canton Repository* lauding ArtsinStark for their work on *Kimono as Art*. She noted that *Kimono as Art* might have

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² Correspondence via Flickr. Erica Hudson Pai. (Username: Eleryth) August 30, 2011.
been some Canton residents' first experience in the arts.³ Hence, immediately following Kimono as Art, people were looking forward to the next big exhibition. Albacete was quoted several times as saying that he wanted to take the revenue the museum earned from the exhibition and start an endowment for the purpose of supporting large-scale exhibitions, like Kimono as Art.⁴ After Kimono as Art ended, Albacete also indicated that there were tentative plans for the Canton Museum of Art (CMA) to host a major Mexican art exhibition, which has yet to happen.

When I met with Albacete a year after Kimono as Art, it was clear that he was frustrated and disappointed that there had been no progress on planning another large-scale exhibition. It seemed that despite the success of the exhibition, the city and ArtsinStark, were reluctant to put money into another large-scale exhibition on the same level as Kimono as Art. The exhibition, while successful in drawing a large audience, was less successful financially and the Canton Museum of Art (CMA) was not in position to host any major exhibitions for the next several years.⁵ As mentioned in the first chapter, just months after the close of Kimono as Art, the CMA instituted a five percent pay cut for the staff, reduced their operating hours and instituted a mandatory two week "vacation" for their staff (during which time the museum was closed).⁶ Nearly five years later, there has yet to be a follow up to Kimono as Art.

Throughout my study it became apparent that the relationship between ArtsinStark and the Canton Museum at Art was a tenuous one. Kumi Day told me that she often felt "caught in the middle" between the leadership of the two organizations and acknowledged that the relationship between them was strained.⁷ The leaders of these two organizations, Hankins and Albacete, maintained different visions for the expansion of the arts in Canton. Hankins was open to trying new things and taking some risks. In fact, he was interested in creating as many different events and activities as possible to appeal

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³ Joy Timken, "Kimono' Related Events May Have Been First Adventure in Arts for Many," Canton Repository, May 9, 2009. 'Viewpoints' section.
⁴ Dan Kane, "Record Crowd for 'Kimono as Art' Exhibit," Canton Repository, April 28, 2009, Front Page.
⁵ In the years following Kimono as Art until present, the Canton Museum of Art has not hosted any major, large-scale exhibitions – Exhibitions since Kimono as Art have been smaller and locally-focused or sourced from the museum's permanent collection.
Hankins, whose past involved traveling to small cities and revamping their arts programming, quickly recognized that the majority of people in Canton and Stark County were uncomfortable in the modernist museum setting offered by the Canton Museum of Art. He seemed to have a better understanding of the kinds of activities that would appeal to Canton residents and encouraged the development of events that would take visitors outside of the museum or bring activities into the museum that visitors might not expect. For Hankins, it was important to appeal to the large non-Japanese audience. This was evidenced by the eighty plus events planned for *Kimono as Art*, some that were only loosely related to Japanese culture. The inclusion of certain “cultural” events seemed misguided, even culturally insensitive at times. However, Hankins seemed less concerned with considering whether or not events and activities were culturally appropriate or accurate representations of Japanese culture than offering cultural spectacles.

Albacete also wanted to appeal to a broad audience, but was less keen on experimenting with different activities to attract new visitors. Albacete did not see a reason for the museum to change, but felt that potential new visitors had to change in some way so that they could learn to properly appreciate art and the museum experience. He also complained about ArtsinStark pandering to “the locals” with popular community events such as First Friday. This attitude may have been acceptable for the museum many years ago, but this is not a viable option for contemporary museums that must compete with the number of other activities and entertainment opportunities now available to people.

In their 2002 report, *Mastering Civic Engagement*, the American Association of Museums called upon museums to become more involved with their communities. Essentially, the text points out that the nature and function of museums must change and that in order for museums to remain viable they had to become more inclusive. In one chapter, Christopher Gates, president of the National Civic League at the time, states “it is no longer enough for each of us to exist and work in our separate silos, doing ‘our’

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9 Currently known as the American Alliance of Museums.
work and leaving the public agenda for others."\textsuperscript{10} Gates goes on to illustrate an important point by recounting Theodore Roosevelt's theory that "communities could only reach their potential when all citizens, no matter their background, recognized that they had a role to play in making things better."\textsuperscript{11}

Hankins, in many ways, was following the call of \textit{Mastering Civic Engagement}. Hankins saw the value in creating a range of activities and opportunities for the community. I think the main difference between Hankins' approach and Albacete's, is that Hankins created events with many sectors of the community in mind. He was not interested in presenting "high brow" art; his interest was in fostering community engagement. For Albacete, on the other hand, the measure of success for the museum was still tied to exhibitions. He was more concerned (or worried) about the artistic content of the displays, rather than thinking about how the museum could become more engaged with its communities.

The Canton cultural revival continues to move forward, although not necessarily in the forms many thought it would after \textit{Kimono as Art}. In March 2012, ArtsinStark unveiled the "20/20 Vision" plan — a ten-year plan to expand the arts and support economic development in Canton.\textsuperscript{12} The "20/20 Vision" plan consisted of ten separate plans focused on furthering the development of cultural tourism, public art, and education as well as supporting innovation and individual artists. Five of the plans were designated for implementation in five different cities in Stark County.

Some of the proposed projects included the renovation of historic city blocks in several small Stark County cities; integration of more art-focused curriculum into K-12 schools; development of a marketing partnership between the Football Hall of Fame, the Cultural Center and several other small cultural organizations in Canton;\textsuperscript{13} and the creation of a "monumental series" of public art entitled "The Eleven," depicting the eleven "greatest moments in professional football."

\textsuperscript{11} Gates, "Civic Landscape," 24.
\textsuperscript{13} Other organizations included the McKinley Museum, Canton Classic Car Museum, and the National First Ladies Library.
Despite a continued population decline, the city has proceeded forward with a number of these initiatives. However, there has been little talk about the Canton Museum of Art’s exhibition programming and almost no explanation as to why plans to host another cultural exhibition, as suggested during *Kimono as Art*, is not in the works. It seems that the most effort is being placed on cultural events taking place outside of the museum structure. Also, as of late, there seems to be less focus on the development of programming and more focus on improving the physical and aesthetic environment in Canton and other cities in Stark County. Again, I think Hankins realizes that taking art outside of the traditional museum setting will reach a much broader audience and thus have more impact. Residents will be able to witness the changes taking place within the city, whereas activities in the museum still only reach a limited audience of visitors.

Also I wonder how Canton residents would react to an exhibition on another culture. Would they be as interested in another culture? It is possible that part of *Kimono as Art*’s popularity could have been tied to the popularity of Japan through Japanese manga and popular culture. Until ArtsinStark or the CMA attempt to host another exhibition on a foreign culture, it is hard to speculate how the community would react to it.

Another potential drawback for Canton organizations wishing to develop “ethnic” cultural activities may be the difficulty in finding volunteers of a specific ethnicity to assist with planning and the creation of cultural events. When I interned at the museum in 2002, the museum was in the midst of planning an exhibition of art and artifacts from indigenous American Indian tribes of the Great Lakes area.¹⁴ It was on a much smaller scale than *Kimono as Art* with no cultural activities planned and no ambitious marketing campaign. The museum experienced difficulty in finding an indigenous person to assist the exhibition team in making sure the display and object labels were appropriate and culturally sensitive. However, these attempts to recruit cultural consultants, for the indigenous artifacts exhibition and *Kimono as Art*, demonstrated that the CMA wished to be culturally sensitive and understood that they needed a cultural expert to assist them in its endeavors.

During *Kimono as Art*, Albacete and the CMA seemed more concerned with

¹⁴ Exhibition: *Turkey River: Native American Art of the Ohio Country*, 2003
cultural sensitivity than ArtsinStark. This may have been because of the museum staff’s closer relationship with the Japanese in Japan (while working with the Kubota Museum) and with Kumi Day in Canton. Albacete himself demonstrated some awareness of Asian American concerns and even indicated that he had briefly wondered about the association of Madame Butterfly with the exhibition. However, this concern was not enough to prevent the inclusion of questionable representations of Japanese culture such as those by Meliko the Geisha Girl and in the staging of Madame Butterfly.

Gina Marchetti points out in her book, Romance and the “Yellow Peril,” that the narrative of Madame Butterfly illustrates the “West’s” racist disregard for the values and emotions of those who live outside its domain.”\(^\text{15}\) The decision to allow performances such as Madame Butterfly and The Mikado to be associated with Kimono as Art similarly reflected this disregard. There was little consideration given to how these Orientalized representations would be perceived by Japanese and Japanese American. Furthermore, performances in “yellowface” may have reinforced existing stereotypes of Asians and Asian Americans that non-Asians may have already internalized. As scholar, Robert Lee writes, “yellowface marks the Oriental as indelibly alien.”\(^\text{16}\) The inclusion and implicit “approval” of “yellowface” performances during the run of Kimono as Art revealed the persistent notion that Japanese (Asians) were decidedly foreign.

In my ethnographic research I was surprised, however, to find out that all of the Japanese residents and Japanese American women I spoke to were unconcerned with the caricature-like representations of the Japanese and non-Japanese people dressing up in “yellowface.” For the most part it seemed as if they were either not disturbed by these performances or were entirely unaware of them. I found that the women were most offended by the conflation of Japanese cultural aspects with those of another Asian culture. Kumi Day, Toshie Kenney, and Beverly Kerecman each mentioned that they were bothered by people either wearing a kimono in a wrong or inappropriate fashion or by people wearing clothing of another Asian culture while intending to “look Japanese.” Day discussed several instances in which members of the Kimono Leadership Committee

\(^\text{15}\) Gina Marchetti, Romance and the “Yellow Peril”: Race, Sex, and Discursive Strategies in Hollywood Fiction (Berkley: University of California Press, 1993); 81.

tried to use a decorative item or presented an idea that was Chinese or of another Asian culture and she had to explain to them that it would be an inappropriate representation of Japanese culture. It seemed that for Japanese and Japanese Americans it was more important that they distinguish themselves as distinctly Japanese, and not be confused with other Asian ethnic groups. It is likely that most of the women, at one time or another, had experience being confused for another Asian ethnicity while living in Ohio.

Japanese residents and Japanese Americans were, however, pleased to see Japanese culture on display in a city where they were often marginalized. When I lived in Canton, I would have welcomed any positive representation of Asian culture, whether culturally appropriate or not, which I suspect may have been the case for the Japanese and Japanese American participants. Some recognition was better than being ignored. While I was initially surprised to find that the women were not very concerned or offended by some of the questionable Orientalist representations, I acknowledge that as someone who grew up Asian American and is concerned with Asian American issues, problematic representations of Asian and Asian Americans may be more disturbing to me than to the women I interviewed. Also, Kumi Day and the Japanese resident women lived in Japan during their formative years and did not experience racism as I had while living in Ohio. Even the Japanese American women had grown up within a small Japanese American community, and although they experienced racism, the fact that they belonged to an “ethnic” community seemed to soften the blow. My sensitivity to these things may be the result of living in a city where my family and I were one of the few Asians and were often subject to racist comments, from well-meaning stereotypical compliments to overt racist slurs.

As I discussed in the previous chapter, most of the Asian Americans I interviewed from Canton or other cities in Ohio did not identify as “Asian American.” They generally choose to identify themselves solely by their Asian ethnic origin. I, myself, was unfamiliar with the Asian American movement and attendant issues until I moved away from Canton. However, my experiences as an Asian American living in Canton are also what eventually led me to become involved in Asian American studies. Likewise, perhaps it is pertinent for me to acknowledge my own limitations in addressing Asian American specific issues because of my biracial heritage, being both white and
Asian. I feel I must acknowledge that this in some ways gave me a privileged position, growing up in a community where nearly all of my surrounding family and friends were white, middle class, and college-educated.

I was also surprised to find that nearly all of the Japanese and Japanese American women had not attended any other *Kimono as Art* or Japanese cultural related events, other than those they were involved in. My assumption was that they would have heavily participated in and attended many of the events. Maybe they were not that interested in the “typical Japanese things” that *KimonoFest* had to offer or were simply disinterested in any of the event offerings. Kumi Day and the Sho-Jo-Ji dancers stated that they were too preoccupied with their own activities to participate in anything else. Toshie Kenney and Naoko Oyabu-Mathis indicated that they have wanted to see more of the events and activities, but were either too busy or simply forgot.

Additionally, I noticed a split between the activities in which the Japanese resident women participated and those in which the Japanese American women participated. As mentioned previously, there was no direct collaboration between these two groups. In fact, I sensed that the Japanese American women were somewhat uncomfortable under the scrutiny of the Japanese resident women from their comments during our interview.\(^\text{17}\) I have wondered if the lack of attendance at “Japanese” events by the Japanese American participants and vice versa had anything to do with this lack of connection between the two groups.

Beverly Kerecman acknowledged that she thought that the Japanese American story did not have a place in *Kimono as Art* and recognized Japanese American culture as very different and removed from Japanese culture. If Kerecman felt that the Japanese American story did not have a place in *Kimono as Art*, did she also have reservations about participating as a Japanese American? There is often an expectation that those of Asian decent, even if they are generation removed from their ethnic country of origin, should be knowledgeable about all things pertaining to their Asian culture. However, I feel that Asian Americans have a valid stake in helping construct a representation of their Asian ethnic culture even if they themselves are somewhat removed from the culture. Representations of Asian cultures affect the ways Asian Americans are viewed by non-

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\(^{17}\) Beverly Kerecman and Nanci Taketa, Interview with author, March 31, 2010.
Asians since they are often confused as being "Asian." In a place like Canton, where there are few Asians and Asian Americans and the two are often conflated, having some control over representations maybe beneficial to Asian Americans. It's possible that this is particular to the Midwest, as in other parts of the U.S. where there are larger populations of Asian and Asian Americans it might be unnecessary for Asian Americans to participate in the representation of Asian cultures in venues open to the public.

The KLC decided to include Japanese American voices in the form of talks given by author Monica Sone and actor George Takei. Both Sone and Takei spoke about their internment experiences during World War II. What is further interesting is that Monica Sone was asked to speak at a *Kimono as Art* press conference held in fall of 2008. Why did the organizers think Sone’s Japanese American internment story would be a good introduction to *Kimono as Art*, an exhibition that was focused on Japanese culture? The invitation for Sone to speak at the press conference showed that KLC members were unaware of the differences between Japanese Americans and Japanese citizens.

Sone’s book, *Nisei Daughter*, was the subject of a month-long series of talks and lectures created by the Stark County Public Library System. Sone and Takei’s talks may have been many Stark County residents’ introduction to learning about the Japanese American internment. Yet, beyond the internment dialogue there was no discussion of any other aspects of Japanese American culture or history. Like Kerecman, I also felt that this inclusion of the Japanese American internment story during an exhibition about Japanese culture was an odd pairing.

The decision to present the Japanese American internment story may have been because the KLC conflated the experiences of Japanese and Japanese Americans and associated the internments with Japanese culture. In other words, they did not understand that it was specific to the Japanese American experience. Alternatively, they may have also wished to include the internment story in order to educate the community about the hardships faced by Japanese Americans during WWII in an effort to generate “sympathy” for the Japanese in America. The Kimono Leadership Committee (KLC) members may

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18 When I asked interviewees for their thoughts on the inclusion of a specifically Japanese American events, they did not answer the question straightforward and seemed to not understand what I was asking. Albacete brought up the participation of the Japanese American children of the Japanese participating in some events, but this does not answer the question of whether or not the Japanese American internment story was relevant to *Kimono as Art*. 107
have been aware that some people in the community, especially among the older generations, may have still held bitter feelings toward the Japanese. This effort to offer a "sympathetic" picture of the Japanese Americans may have been because KLC was concerned about possible negative reactions to *Kimono as Art* and the Japanese cultural events. As stated in chapter three, Stark County is home to many veterans of U.S. wars in Asia—many who still hold bitter feelings toward Japanese (or because of misrecognition, *all Asians*).

Albacete told me about one scenario in which he was called into the gallery during *Kimono as Art* to talk with a man, a WWII veteran, who was outraged to see a "Japanese exhibition" in Canton. Albacete had to speak with the man for quite a while.19 The man eventually calmed down and finished viewing the exhibition. It is possible that the decision to include the internment story may have been KLC’s attempt to humanize the Japanese for older non-Asian Stark County residents who may have still had residual negative feelings about the Japanese from their experiences during WWII. The fact that they tried to do this via Japanese American internment stories further demonstrates the way in which Japanese and Japanese Americans were not distinguished as two different groups of citizens (of Japan and of America) by KLC and the *Kimono as Art* audience.

Albacete explicitly stated that he did not want the audience to mistake the artwork of Kubota as "old," but wanted them to understand that Kubota’s works were contemporary pieces of art attempting to replicate ancient techniques. Albacete’s concern with emphasizing that Kubota was a twentieth century artist, showed that he wanted to avoid representing Japanese culture as stereotypically "anti-modern." However, when the exhibition and *KimonoFest* events are looked at as a whole, there was still an encompassing narrative that emphasized the "traditional" nature of Kubota’s work and associated it with "traditional" Japanese crafts and activities. Local journalists and writers helped contribute to this romanticized vision of Japan steeped in an ancient history and practices. One journalist entitled her article on the exhibition, "Ancient Artistry," while

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another journalist suggested that some *Kimono as Art* related events gave participants a “peek into the age-old traditions of Japan.”20

However, there was some attempt to connect contemporary Japanese culture to *Kimono as Art*. One such event was a mini Japanese “film festival” that was not widely publicized. The other event, known as *Club New Fukasuki*, was a social event, which took place several weeks before the *Kimono as Art* opening. The event intended to mimic a “Tokyo night club” held at the nearby Massillon Museum of Art. *Club New Fukasuki* was little more than young people dressing up in “Harajuku”-esque Japanese street fashion and eating sushi. There was no evidence of any explanation or education, even on contemporary elements of Japanese culture, presented at the event or anywhere during *Kimono as Art*. Despite their efforts, Japanese culture was more often than not, romanticized and represented as anti-modern.

It should not be forgotten that *Kimono as Art* took place in the midst of Canton’s cultural revival. ArtsinStark and the Canton Museum of Art were counting on *Kimono as Art* to serve as the definitive proof that the arts could help bring tourist and economic success to Canton. In the many articles about *Kimono as Art* and its auxiliary events published in the *Canton Repository*, it was continually mentioned that *Kimono as Art* could potentially bring in non-local visitors, and thus, more money for the local economy. Several of the articles that appeared in the *Canton Repository* mentioned that the intent of the exhibition was not only to present a culturally enriching exhibition for Canton residents, but also to generate revenue for the city and county.

Albacete is quoted as stating that the exhibition would draw out-of-town visitors and hence, economically benefit the local business where visitors will spend their money.21 A few weeks prior to the close of Kimono, Albacete submitted a piece to the *Canton Repository*, in which he called for the city to “repeat [the] success of ‘Kimono’.” To illustrate his point, Albacete pointed out that a large number of visitors had traveled from not only outside of the city, but also from outside of the state, to see the exhibition. He lauded the volunteers and museum staff and pointed out they were plainly capable of


hosting large-scale exhibitions such as *Kimono as Art*. Later in the article, Albacete attempted to solicit big donors by commenting that the museum could not only depend on the Timken Foundation for financial support, but that they needed other partners to assist them as well.\(^2\)

While *Kimono as Art* ended up being more popular than even KLC predicted, the model would be difficult to repeat and sustain in a small arts community like Canton. People were very excited about *Kimono as Art* and its auxiliary events because it was the first time anything like this had taken place in Canton. However, once the exhibition was over, employees and volunteers were exhausted. Volunteers can only be relied upon so much. ArtsinStark and CMA have only a few employees, which is sufficient for their regular events and exhibition, but not enough to manage multiple “blockbuster” exhibitions.

Albacete pointed out in his editorial article that the museum and arts community had relied heavily on the support of the Timken Foundation for financial support in the past and for *Kimono as Art*, which was not sustainable for either the museum or the Timken Foundation in the future.\(^2\) Also, while CMA receives a portion of its operating budget from the ArtsinStark annual campaign, they are also competing with ArtsinStark and other Cultural Center organizations for financial support. For example, CMA receives around twenty percent of its operating budget from ArtsinStark, the other eighty percent must come from grants or corporate or individual donors, but donors may already be obligated to support ArtsinStark or other cultural organizations. CMA and other cultural organizations cannot entirely depend on ArtsinStark for all their financial support and thus are also competing with the organization and each other for donor support.

While Albacete seeks large donors, it seems that Hankins has proven that appealing to a broader audience can be successful. For the last several years ArtsinStark has raised over 99 percent of its $2.6 million budget through corporate and individual donations.\(^2\) Hankins believed that appealing to a larger audience would, in the long-term, generate more income to sustain larger shows. Additionally, if the museum has a large

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\(^2\) Ibid.

\(^2\) ArtsinStark Fact Sheet. ArtsinStark, Canton, Ohio. February 2012.
audience it is more likely to give the impression that the museum is doing something positive for the community—people want to be there. This presents a more favorable view of the museum and potential donors and grants agencies are more willing to support the museum. Grants agencies are interested in supporting museums that are active and open to their communities.

Although there was no follow-up exhibition to *Kimono as Art*, the Canton revitalization effort has been ongoing and has now spread to other cities in the county. ArtsinStark along with the Stark Community Foundation unveiled an ambitious ten year arts and economic development plan. One part of the plan focuses on seven separate objectives such as Arts and Education, Public Art, Cultural Tourism and the Cultural Center. The other part of the plan focuses on incorporating the arts in individual communities in Stark County, and seeks to revitalize and rebuild the historic city centers and bring back businesses and economic development to individual cities outside of Canton.25

The city is proceeding forward with incorporating the arts into its other cultural activities. It seems as though, perhaps much to the chagrin of Albacete, that the focus is on bringing the arts into the communities and again, making the arts more accessible to a larger audience. However, this complex plan is so far reaching that there seems to be a bit of something for everyone within it (much like the *Kimono as Art* events?). The popularity of *Kimono as Art* was surely influential in garnering the support of the city to proceed with urban renewal. Yet, this support for the arts is not taking place in the form of support for art exhibitions at the CMA.

It is difficult to assess the total impact of *Kimono as Art* in Canton. On the one hand, there were positive outcomes generated by the exhibition. Despite some misguided attempts at showing “Japanese culture,” the exhibition *did* present some information on an Asian culture in a place where it had never been done before. Also, it allowed Canton/Stark County residents to view the art of another country within their city—an opportunity, which was not available before. This may have also been, for some visitors, the first time they viewed the art of another culture in person. The exhibition, with its

25 The 20/20 Vision plan, which was unveiled in March 2012, is fully detailed on ArtsinStark’s website. http://www.artsinstark.com/20_20_VISION.html.
many auxiliary events, did engage the community in a way that had never been done in Canton previously. The collaborative efforts of the multiple organizations involved showed that Canton could hold large-scale exhibitions and events and actively engage with the community.

On the other hand, it was inevitable that there would be some gaps and holes in the programming for *Kimono as Art*. The large number of volunteers and the multiple “leaders” on the Kimono Leadership Committee made it difficult to track the many different events and regulate their content. While *Kimono as Art* was supposed to be focused on Japanese culture there was never a clear definition of what that should consist of. Having a single Japanese volunteer cultural consultant, who could only do so much, and whose advice was sometimes begrudgingly accepted, may have further hindered the process.

Kumi Day hoped that by educating non-Asians about Japanese culture it would help them to become more accepting of Japanese and Japanese American people. Day was affected by her and her daughters’ experiences with racism in the area and was aware that many people in Canton and Stark County knew very little about Asian cultures. This seemed to influence her desire to help out in her daughter’s classrooms and with *Kimono as Art*. However, as with many cultural exhibitions, there are often two narrative tropes presented to the public when discussing people of another culture. One, which shows the “white” visitors, that the marginalized people are “just like them,” and one that showed how different the marginalized people are from them. The latter was more often seen throughout *Kimono as Art* and its ancillary events. *Kimono as Art* more or less focused on the contrasts of Japanese culture to American “white” culture, further planting a wedge between “us” (Americans) and “them” (non-Americans/Japanese).

In addition, the content of the Japanese cultural event and representations of Japanese culture may have simply reaffirmed the non-Japanese audiences’ preexisting ideas of Japan as inherently passive, feminine, and anti-modern. Mari Yoshihara, when referring to 18th and 19th century views on Asian art, states that Asia was typically associated with “pre-modern simplicity, naturalness, [and] tradition.”26 Asia, and

specifically Japan, was seen as retaining a "purity and sincerity," that was lost from modern society. Comments made by visitors and printed in local newspaper articles confirmed that the exhibition visitors viewed Japan in this way. One visitor likened the viewing of the kimonos as "something spiritual," while Jane Timken stated that she believed the "spirit of Itchiku Kubota" was guiding KLC through the planning process. The words, "simplicity," "natural," "traditional," and references to "ancient," were used multiple times in writings about the exhibition that appeared in newspapers across the state and in nationally distributed magazines. One newspaper writer even suggested, "if driving to see kimonos threatens your no-nonsense Midwestern sensibilities, you can always stop in afterward at the Pro Football Hall of Fame." The same writer also entitled his article "Beauty to dye for" alluding to the stereotype of the suicidal Japanese woman and called the kimonos "very traditionally Japanese."

Taking into consideration the nature of a number of affiliated events and comments made by visitors and organizers, I am not certain that Kimono as Art was completely beneficial to Japanese Americans and possibly even the Japanese U.S. residents. The two groups were not clearly distinguished from Japanese nationals (from Japan). If anything, Kimono as Art may have made them seem more foreign (as they were performing "Japanese-ness," rather than a Japanese American or "American" identity) which further reinforced the idea that Japanese and Japanese Americans were indistinguishable from one another. Day mentioned that she wished to make personal connections with people in order to influence them into thinking positively about Japanese people, but I wonder how many personal connections she was able to make with the larger Kimono as Art audience. Did they even realize that Day was a member of their community?

ArtsinStark and the Canton Museum of Art sought economic benefits by presenting an exhibition of Japanese kimonos and cultural activities. They recruited Japanese and Japanese Americans to assist them in this endeavor. Japanese culture was used to benefit the cultural revival in order for Canton to gain economic benefits under

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the guise of a “celebration of Japanese culture.” While the economic situation in Canton has improved and the city has seen marked cultural growth, the situation for Japanese Americans (or all Asian Americans) has seen little change since I last lived there. Attitudes toward Asian Americans may have improved among some sectors of the population and the Asian American population has slightly increased, but Asian Americans are still marginalized and still cannot be understood as sharing in what is “American.”

The “cultural” events created to accompany the exhibition offered both positives and negatives cultural experiences. Performances like *Madame Butterfly* and *The Mikado* were objectionable because they presented Japanese culture through the lens of non-Japanese. Of course, one could argue that nearly all the events affiliated with *Kimono as Art* were filtered through the lens of non-Asians as the decision on what events could be included ultimately lay with the non-Asian KLC members. Other cultural activities, including many of the *KimonoFest* activities, may have been more appropriate inclusions, but could not in themselves convey the complexity of the culture. Unfortunately, I do not know firsthand how the workshops were presented or how in-depth the presenters delved into their subject matter.

*Kimono as Art* and its events did not acknowledge the complexities of American identity and failed to recognize the specificities of Japanese and Japanese American identities. In the end, *Kimono as Art* may have introduced the people of Canton and Stark County to some aspects of Japanese culture, but it did not help them understand or appreciate the distinctions between Japanese nationals and Japanese Americans, nor did it help them to recognize the problems of Orientalism. Yet, while the exhibition and events were far from perfect, continued exposure to other cultures in a place that has remained racially homogenous for a long time, has the potential to be a great benefit to the local population, as it requires people to recognize and focus on a culture outside of their location. Organizers, who wish to present ethnographic information about an ethnic culture need to be sincere about their intentions, do careful research to ensure that the representation of the culture is sensitive to the specificities of that culture, and be certain that the information they provide to their community is accurate.
**APPENDIX A**

**CANTON DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT**

**MASTER PLAN 2003**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**Objectives**
In order to achieve the goals outlined, the plan has these objectives to accomplish:

**Objective 1:**
*Build on a range of target markets.*
The key target markets are:
- Downtown residents
- County-wide residents
- Downtown workers
- Regional Visitors

**Objective 2:**
*Coordinate public and private sector investment to maximize benefits.*

**Objective 3:**
*Build a distinct identity for the downtown.*

**Key Revitalization Strategies**
In order to accomplish the goals for downtown revitalization, the strategies listed below should be followed. A common theme among these strategies is the concept of place making or creating a critical mass of attractive uses and activities that can alter local perceptions of the area and reposition it as a new and exciting experience.

**Strategy 1:**
*Enhance the Cultural Corridor*
The "cultural corridor" extends along Market Avenue. Facilities along the cultural corridor should be spaced to make use of existing parking resources where feasible.

**Strategy 2:**
*Develop Downtown Housing*
Canton should promote creation of downtown housing to increase the base of consumer spending within walking distance of restaurants, retail and services. It also should be developed in combination with office and employment centers to provide units near work locations.

**Strategy 3:**
*Create a Destination Retail and Entertainment Center (Downtown Canton Center)*
A focus area must be established with a high concentration of retail activities such that it serves as a destination in its own right. Specialty retail, dining and entertainment are needed that position this "retail core" as an exciting place, distinct from suburban mall models.

An eight-block area along Market Avenue, from 2nd Street North to 6th Street North should be the focus of this revitalized retail core and in this plan is termed the "Downtown Canton Center." A lively street level experience should develop here that is primarily retail in nature. It should be marketed as a preferred business address. Promotions and special events should be organized to highlight its attractions.

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**FRAMEWORK MAP**
The map on the following page diagrams the fundamental organizing concept of the downtown plan:
- At the core lies the Downtown Canton Center, with a mix of specialty retail, offices and cultural attractions.
- The Cultural Corridor runs the length of Market Avenue, with a variety of performance spaces, galleries and museums spaced along it.
- The eastern edge of the core is flanked with a rehabilitated Warehouse District, which includes offices, housing, dining, entertainment and cultural uses.
- A special mixed use area lies between Downtown Canton Center and the Warehouse District, which includes special mixed use, including a convention center and an urban village.
- The western flank is anchored by the Timken Campus and revitalized residential areas.
- Between Timken Campus and the Downtown Canton Center is a revitalized area of offices and higher density residential.

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Strategy 4: Develop New Office and Retail/Mixed Use Projects
Office space should be created through adaptive reuse of existing buildings and construction of new ones. In many cases, offices should be combined with retail.

Canton must offer space of high quality, with sufficient communications support and an overall setting that is appealing to executives and their workers. Office users now need telecommunications and mechanical systems far more extensive than offered in the past and Canton must strive to provide state of the art office space.

Strategy 5: Highlight the Different Character Areas of Downtown
While the focus of revitalization energy should be on the Downtown Canton Center and on strengthening the cultural corridor, the plan also seeks to guide development in other important "neighborhoods" that support the Downtown Canton Center concept. These are areas where appropriate private investment should be reinforced with public policies that facilitate improvements and they also include some individual special projects that can help to energize downtown at large. The Character Areas are:

TUSCARAWAS CORRIDOR CHARACTER AREA
Auto-oriented functions are expected to continue, therefore, the corridor should develop as an attractive entry into the downtown and should include designs that form a compatible transition into adjacent residential neighborhoods. Businesses that can serve these neighborhoods, as well as the downtown as a whole should be promoted. Ties to the past as well as the pedestrian experience should be emphasized.

Potential projects:
- Enhance the Tuscarawas corridor by emphasizing ties to its historic past
- Promote the Lincoln Highway by providing directional and interpretive signs
- Extend landscaping along the corridor (some of which is currently planned)
- Apply site landscaping guidelines along property edges
- Promote mixed-use developments
- Incorporate a bicycle path into the street redevelopment plan. This can be accomplished by simply restriping the street.

4th STREET NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER AREA
This includes the four blocks bounded by Walnut on the west, and Cherry on the east, 5th Street N.E. on the north and 3rd Street N.E. on the south. This area is envisioned as a new "urban village," and should include market rate, multifamily housing, along with some supporting commercial services.

Potential projects:
- Medium density multifamily housing, in the form of four-plex apartments and townhouses.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The citizens of Canton will make important decisions in the next few years that will greatly influence the destiny of downtown. These actions will reflect the anticipated role of the city center in the region as a whole and they will also express the vision for the way in which individual projects are interrelated within the city core itself. These include decisions about the location of new civic facilities, investment in infrastructure and development of individual parcels and land uses. It is essential that each of these actions be considered in the context of others, to assure that the potential cumulative benefits can be realized. It is in that light that the Canton Downtown Plan provides a framework for coordinating individual projects in ways that governmental agencies, civic groups and individuals can make informed, strategic investment decisions over the coming years.

The framework for downtown is composed of a set of development areas which focus on concentrations of selected land uses. This helps establish a “critical mass” of activity. Other uses, in addition to those emphasized, can certainly occur within each of these areas, but the emphasis should be on those highlighted as part of the preferred development character.

Existing Economic Conditions
The economic activity downtown has shifted, and it now faces difficult but not uncommon obstacles to economic redevelopment. Nevertheless, opportunities for revitalization exist. While retail decline has occurred, downtown continues to be a major employment hub and a center for civic and cultural activities. Recognizing opportunity, new investors have demonstrated their commitment to downtown by acquiring several properties for rehabilitation and redevelopment. These provide opportunities for revitalizing the core.

Key Issues
- Downtown is underutilized.
- Need stronger demand for the real estate, through a variety of active uses.
- Limited hours of operation
- Insufficient venues for retail, dining and entertainment.
- Perception of a safety problem
- Perceived lack of parking

Key Assets
Canton retains many features that are assets which can be used to anchor other investment:
- Architectural Assets
- Streetscape Assets
- Cultural Resources
- Committed Leadership

Goals
The plan seeks to achieve these basic goals:

Goal 1:
Make downtown a vital place, that includes all Canton citizens.

Goal 2:
Create value and wealth for the community.

Goal 3:
Affirm the role of downtown as the center of Stark County.

Goal 4:
Enhance the quality of life for Canton residents.
- Duplexes
- Mixed use corner commercial buildings
- Neighborhood-based services, including day care
- Neighborhood pocket-park

NORTHWEST AND SOUTHWEST CHARACTER AREAS
These include the blocks that extend northwest and southwest of the Downtown Canton Center and the Cultural Corridor. Existing single family houses with historic character should be preserved and new development should be constructed to be compatible with them. Some commercial uses that support the neighborhood should also be encouraged, in the tradition of the corner store.

Potential projects:
- Single family houses
- Medium density multifamily housing, in the form of four-plex apartments and townhouses.
- Duplexes
- Corner commercial buildings
- Neighborhood-based services, including day care
- Neighborhood park

SPECIAL MIXED USE AREA
This includes the blocks that extend from 3rd Street N.E. to Tuscarawas and extend from Walnut to Cherry Avenue. This area should be enhanced as a key link between these areas. A major anchor such as the convention center would be appropriate here.

Potential projects:
- Convention Center
- Sports facility
- Railway link
- Hall of Fame element

CORNERSTONE SQUARE GOVERNMENT CENTER
This includes the blocks that extend from Tuscarawas to 4th Street S.E. and extends from Walnut to Cherry Avenue. This area should be addressed more directly as a market opportunity for downtown. An important step is to provide services in the core that appeal to this market and to enhance pedestrian connections from the retail core to Cornerstone Square to facilitate this business activity.

Potential projects:
- Enhance connections to the downtown businesses

SOUTHWEST GOVERNMENT CENTER
Another center of governmental functions has emerged around 2nd and 3rd Streets South, and west of Market Avenue. This government center should be further strengthened with development of other, new public agency offices.

Potential projects:
- Enhance connections to the downtown businesses
- Enhance Court Avenue edges
- Federal Building

WAREHOUSE DISTRICT CHARACTER AREA
This includes the blocks that extend from 5th Street N.E. to 3rd Street S.E. This area varies in its extension east from Cherry from one to six blocks. Redevelop this area to include loft residential units, professional offices and dining and entertainment opportunities.

Potential projects:
- Promote adaptive reuse of warehouses
- Improve the streetscape with a special design theme related to the warehouse character
- Enhance connections to the downtown businesses

TIMKEN CAMPUS CHARACTER AREA
This includes the blocks that extend from Tuscarawas to 4th Street N.W. and extend from Shorb Avenue N.W to McKinley Avenue N.W. Residential blocks around the campus should be revitalized with single-family and multifamily housing that will also help support Downtown Canton Center.

Potential projects:
- Medium density multifamily housing, in the form of four-plex apartments and townhouses.
- Duplexes
- Mixed use corner commercial buildings

CLEVELAND-MCKINLEY BUSINESS CORRIDOR
This area lies west of the commercial core, along McKinley and Cleveland Avenues. This
is generally bounded by 2nd Street S. and 5th Street N. A mix of professional offices, ground level retail and residential uses should be promoted here to reinforce the Downtown Canton Center.

Potential projects:
- Ground level retail
- Residential and offices in upper floors

Strategy 6:
Develop Special Projects as Accents
Several special projects are envisioned that will invigorate downtown and serve as focal points of activity. These include commercial and residential developments, as well as governmental institutions, and cultural and recreational facilities.

Potential projects:
- Cultural and Entertainment Site (East Side of Market)
- Convention Center
- Community Market at Court and 5th NW
- 4th Street Corridor Mixed Use Development
- Sports Village at Hercules Site

Strategy 7:
Preserve Historic Resources
Historic resources make up a key part of Downtown Canton's character. They should be preserved in order to maintain a link to the community's heritage and because they help to establish a unique identity for the area.

Strategy 8: Enhance Urban Design Systems
Urban design systems should be coordinated to achieve the plan objectives. These include circulation systems for pedestrian, bicyclists and automobiles, as well as street design, public information, parks and open space. These are discussed in detail in individual chapters in the plan.

Strategy 9:
Provide a Proactive Organizational Structure
In order to achieve the many capital improvements recommended in this plan, strong leadership is needed. This includes both the public and private sectors. The city government must organize to facilitate desired investment downtown by assuring that adequate information, policies and specific plans are available to guide development. The Partnership also must strive to facilitate development by assisting with property redevelopment, as well as planning, recruitment and promotions.

Recommendations:
- Enhance the base of planning information.
- Provide a development coordinator.
- Coordinate a Redevelopment Program.

Downtown Canton Center - The Retail Core
A key step in revitalizing downtown is to create a critical mass of successful retail activity. Canton's traditional downtown retail core area has several revitalization opportunities, and the primary focus is located between 6th Street North and 2nd Street North, Cleveland Avenue to the west and Walnut Avenue to the east.

The urban design concept for the Downtown Canton Center includes a system of different street types as well as an inventory of recommended uses, parking facilities and gateways.

Special Projects
The following six Special Project sites have specific development proposals:

Cultural and Entertainment Site - Downtown Canton Center
This site is the two blocks bounded by Market Avenue on the west and Walnut on the...
By 1960, the pressure for parking had caused the creation of several parking lots, but nonetheless, downtown remained a densely developed area. In most blocks, facades defined the street edges and provided interest to pedestrians. Reestablishing this density of uses, especially in the area defined as Downtown Canton Center, is a focus of this plan.

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Conventional Center Option:
This site is four blocks between Tuscarawas and 3rd Street N. and Walnut on the west and Cherry Avenue on the east. It would develop with a convention center as the focus.

Community Market and Enhanced Urban Neighborhood
This site is four blocks bounded by Market Avenue on the east, Cleveland on the west, 6th Street N.W. on the north and 4th Street N.W. on the south. It would develop as a mixed-used neighborhood, with a community market as the focus.

Alternate Convention Center at McKinley Grand Hotel
This area is bounded by Piedmont Avenue on the west, Walnut on the east, Tuscarawas on the north and 4th Street S.E. on the south. This is an alternate location for a convention center.

Hercules Property - Sports Center
This site is centrally located and highly visible from US Route 30. The site could be developed as a major community-oriented sports complex.

4th Street Corridor Mixed-use Development
This site is the four blocks bounded by Walnut on the west, and Cherry on the east; 5th
Street N.E. on the north and 3rd Street N.E. on the south. The concept is to develop an "urban village" with housing and support commercial, as well as live-work opportunities.

**Historic Resources**

Historic resources should be redeveloped as key anchors in the downtown revitalization.

**Recommended Actions**

1. Provide flexibility in code compliance for historic buildings.
2. Facilitate nominating properties as historic by producing a Multiple Property Listing.
3. Create a grants and loan program for historic resources in Downtown Canton.
4. Apply design guidelines for rehabilitating historic structures.
5. Develop a heritage tourism marketing plan.
6. Develop an educational program to build awareness and provide technical information about historic preservation.

**Automobile Circulation & Wayfinding**

Automobile circulation should be designed to support economic development goals and create a pedestrian-friendly environment.

**Recommended Actions**

1. Coordinate transportation systems to be consistent with downtown development objectives.
2. Convert east and west cross streets to two-way streets.
3. Establish a strong entry identity along major entry corridors.
4. Provide effective wayfinding for automobiles along key routes into the downtown.
5. Promote the use of mass transit.
6. Use a special graphics package to establish a strong sense of identity.

**Parking Systems**

Parking should be planned to support other economic development objectives and serve desired uses.

**Recommended Actions**

1. Develop and manage parking as a system.
2. Confirm distribution and quantity of projected parking needs.
3. Provide diagonal parking in the Market Avenue Retail Core.
4. Enhance surface lots in the downtown area by the use of landscaping, signs and decorative lights.
5. Locate other uses around underutilized parking structures such as civic facilities, housing and commercial use.

**Pedestrian and Bicycle Systems**

Pedestrian ways, trails and streets should be considered in the broader context of strengthening business centers and linking neighborhoods. Therefore, roadways, sidewalks and trails should be coordinated in a comprehensive system that assures continuity of circulation for pedestrians and bicyclists.

**Recommended Actions**

1. Strengthen the visibility of the pedestrian system.
2. Enhance sidewalks and crosswalks to establish a sense of hierarchy in pedestrian routes.
3. Consider bicycle circulation as a system.
4. Enhance links to the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Rail Depot.
5. Provide trail connections to the downtown core.

**Streetscape Design**

Canton's downtown already has noteworthy streetscape design elements. These streetscape enhancements have established a distinct identity for this portion of Market. The challenge is how to extend streetscape improvements into other parts of downtown in a way that will visually define the urban design framework of this plan.

**Recommended Actions**

1. Use some streetscape elements in a consistent manner throughout the downtown to establish a sense of continuity.
2. Change other streetscape elements to reflect the flavor of individual Character Areas.
3. Use a "Kit of Parts" in streetscape designs.

**Parks and Open Space**

The amount of outdoor space that is officially managed as urban parks and open space in Downtown Canton is limited. More parks and
open space are needed for passive recreation, to serve downtown dwellers and workers.

**Recommended Actions**
1. Develop a series of parks and open spaces that are tailored to meet specific needs of downtown users.
   - Actively Program Central Plaza.
   - Improve Court House Square.
   - Develop a Festival Lot on Court Avenue.
   - Create a Park at 4th Street N.E.
2. Program and manage city center parks in a coordinated system.
3. Establish a Permanent Public Art Program.

**Implementation**
Successful implementation requires a coordinated effort between public and private entities. Economic development and revitalization of the downtown will require vision, investment and commitment from a broad base within the city—private citizens, public officials and many City departments. Key elements are:

**Funding**
A variety of funding mechanisms will be employed. These include the use of improvement districts, capital improvements funds and private sources. These are detailed in an appendix to the plan.

**Phasing**
Many of the projects must be implemented in stages, such that each builds on the previous ones. There are priorities for implementation, which relate to the importance of the project to the overall redevelopment strategy. Recommended phasing steps are also outlined in an appendix.

**Organization**
In most cases, specific groups and organizations are best suited to lead in the execution of the recommended plan actions. Organizational structures are also summarized in an appendix.

**Milestones**
Many of the recommendations in the plan are qualitative, and progress in execution of the plan will be apparent in enhanced quality of life and activity in the area. However, there are some measurable goals set forth in the plan that can be used as milestones:

- Generate a market for 200,000 square feet of retail.
- Add 2,700 new households in the one-mile radius around the downtown.
- Provide 77,000 square feet of Class A office space in the downtown.

The Kresge Block is in the Downtown Canton Center.

The First Ladies Museum Annex is part of the Cultural Corridor.
APPENDIX C
LIST OF EVENTS AFFILIATED WITH KIMONO AS ART

These events appeared on formally printed promotional materials for the exhibition. Events and descriptions listed herein are exactly as they were published. This list, while exhaustive, is not comprehensive. Additionally, it should be noted that the Kimono Leadership Committee counted each night an event ran (those that took place over multiple nights) to formulate their total count of over 80 events that was widely publicized.
* Designates KimonoFest Event.

1. October 15, 2008
   Kimono as Art Press Conference
   “One Book, One Community” Kick-off Event – talk by Monica Sone, author of Nisei Daughter

2. November 6, 2008
   “Essence of Japan” Kimono Kick-off Party
   Cultural Center for the Arts, Canton, Ohio

3. January 16, 17, 18, 2009
   Ohio Youth Ballet Japanese Choreographer Performance with the film, Memoirs of a Geisha. Lions Lincoln Theatre, Massillon, Ohio

4. January 24, 2009
   Canton Symphony Orchestra Prism Rhapsody Japanese Concert
   Umstadt Hall, McKinley High School, Canton, Ohio

5. January 24, 2009
   Club New Fukasuki, Japanese Nightclub
   Massillon Museum of Art, Massillon, Ohio

   Konichiwa Kimono – A celebration of Japanese culture for children and teens.
   Stark County District Library, Canton, Ohio

7. January 31, 2009
   Konichiwa Kimono – A celebration of Japanese culture with tea ceremony for adults.
   Stark County District Library, Canton, Ohio

8. February 5-28, 2009
   Kent State University (KSU) Art Museum Collection of Japanese Kimono Exhibit
   KSU Stark Campus, Main Hall Gallery, Canton, Ohio.
9. February 7, 2009
Unveiling ... *Kimono as Art* Opening Gala
Cultural Center for the Arts, Canton, Ohio

10. February 8, 2009
Japanese Tea Ceremonies, on the half hour
Canton Museum of Art

11. February 8, 2009
Canton Museum of Art Public Opening for *Kimono as Art*
Canton Museum of Art

12. February 8, 2009
*KimonoFest: Sho-Jo-Ji Dancers*
Cultural Center for the Arts

13. February 8, 2009
*KimonoFest: Meliko the Geisha Girl Historical Performance*
Cultural Center for the Arts, Canton, Ohio

14. February 12-17, 2009
*Kimono: Shapes of Time* exhibit
By Faircrest Middle School & KSU Stark Faculty
KSU Stark Fine Arts Gallery, Canton, Ohio

15. February 12, 2009
Palace Theatre Japanese Film Festival Opening Reception & Film
Palace Theatre, Canton, Ohio

16. February 12, 2009
*Kimono* Curator Dale Gluckman Lecture
Canton Museum of Art

17. February 13, 14, 15, 2009
Palace Theatre Japanese Film Festival
Palace Theatre, Canton, Ohio

18. February 13, 14, 15, 20, 21, 22, 2009
*The Mikado*
KSU Stark Theatre, Fine Arts Hall, Canton, Ohio

19. February 14, 2009
Japanese Tea Ceremonies, on the half hour
Canton Museum of Art
20. February 14, 2009  
*KimonoFest: Suminagashi (Paper Marbling) Demonstration*  
Cultural Center for the Arts, Canton, Ohio

21. February 14, 2009  
Bob James and Keiko Matsui Tandem Piano Concert  
Cable Hall, Cultural Center for the Arts, Canton, Ohio

22. February 15, 2009  
*KimonoFest: Furoshiki (Japanese Gift Wrapping) Demonstration*  
Cultural Center for the Arts, Canton, Ohio

23. February 17, 2009  
Sake & Yakitori Cooking Class  
Loretta Paganini School of Cooking, Fisher Foods (grocery store), North Canton, Ohio

24. February 20, 2009  
*Kagemusha* film  
Lions Lincoln Theatre, Massillon, Ohio

25. February 21, 2009  
*Exploring Japanese Art* Student Exhibit Opening Reception  
Cultural Center for the Arts, Canton, Ohio

26. February 21, 2009  
*KimonoFest: Japanese Storytelling with Harold & Jonatha Wright*  
Cultural Center for the Arts, Canton, Ohio

27. February 21, 2009  
*KimonoFest: Meliko the Geisha Girl Historical Performance*  
Cultural Center for the Arts, Canton, Ohio

28. February 21, 2009  
Massillon Museum of Art's *Midori* Fashion Show & Tea Ceremony  
Lions Lincoln Theatre, Massillon, Ohio

29. February 22 –March 1, 2009  
*Exploring Japanese Art* Student Exhibit  
Cultural Center for the Arts, Canton, Ohio

30. February 28, 2009  
*KimonoFest: Sumi-e (painting) & Shodo (calligraphy) Demonstration*  
Cultural Center for the Arts, Canton, Ohio
31. 
February 28, 2009
_KimonoFest:_ Anime and Mange Presentation by Sean McCartle* (cancelled)
Cultural Center for the Arts, Canton, Ohio

32. 
March 1, 2009
Piano Concert by Mayumi Kikuchi
Cultural Center for the Arts, Canton, Ohio

33. 
March 7, 2009
Japanese Tea Ceremonies, on the half hour
Canton Museum of Art

34. 
March 7, 2009
_**KimonoFest:**_ Sho-Jo-Ji Dancers*
Cultural Center for the Arts

35. 
March 7, 2009
_**KimonoFest:**_ Suminagashi (Paper Marbling) Demonstration*
Cultural Center for the Arts, Canton, Ohio

36. 
March 7, 2009
_**KimonoFest:**_ Jason Farnham, Musician-in-residence performance*
(Farnham, former Canton resident, produced and recorded his fourth album
_Kimono,_ in January 2009. The album consisted of music inspired by Japanese
traditional and modern music.)
Cultural Center for the Arts, Canton, Ohio

37. 
March 8, 2009
_KimonoFest:_ Japanese Embroidery and Temari Balls Demonstration by the
Canton Chapter of the Embroidery Guild of America*
Cultural Center for the Arts, Canton, Ohio

38. 
March 8, 2009
_Where Charity and Love Prevail_
Voices of Canton, Inc. (VOCI) Haiku Concert and Bonsai Display
Cable Hall, Cultural Center for the Arts, Canton, Ohio

39. 
March 8, 2009
The Kulas Foundation Music and Dance of Japan Concert
Guzzetta Hall, University of Akron, Akron, Ohio

40. 
March 8, 2009
Jason Farnham, Musician-in-residence performance*
Cultural Center for the Arts, Canton, Ohio
41. March 12, 2009
Noodles, One-Bowl Meals & Japanese Beer Cooking class
Loretta Paganini School of Cooking, Fisher Foods (grocery store), North Canton, Ohio

42. March 14, 2009
KimonoFest: Sumi-e (painting) & Shodo (calligraphy) Demonstration*
Cultural Center for the Arts, Canton, Ohio

43. March 14, 2009
KimonoFest: Ikebana (Flower) International Chapter 54 North Canton
Flower Demonstration & Exhibit*
Cultural Center for the Arts, Canton, Ohio

44. March 15, 2009
KimonoFest: Ikebana (Flower) International Chapter 54 North Canton
Flower Exhibit*
Cultural Center for the Arts, Canton, Ohio

45. March 15, 2009
KimonoFest: Origami Demonstration*
Cultural Center for the Arts, Canton, Ohio

46. March 20, 2009
Master Kubota and Me
Soroptimist International Dramatic Presentation on Itchiku Kubota
Cable Hall, Cultural Center for the Arts, Canton, Ohio

47. March 21, 2009
Japanese Tea Ceremonies, on the half hour
Canton Museum of Art

48. March 21, 2009
KimonoFest: Jujitsu and Samurai Demonstration*
Cultural Center for the Arts, Canton, Ohio

49. March 21, 2009
KimonoFest: Itcho Daiko, Northeast Ohio’s Japanese Taiko Drumming Ensemble*
Cultural Center for the Arts, Canton, Ohio

50. March 22, 2009
"Sumo on Sunday": Sumo wrestling demonstration
Cultural Center for the Arts, Canton, Ohio
51. March 22, 2009
Japanese Tea Ceremonies, on the half hour
Canton Museum of Art

52. March 22, 2009
*KimonoFest: Jujitsu and Samurai Demonstration*
Cultural Center for the Arts, Canton, Ohio

53. March 31- April 2,4, 2009
*Kimiko & the Nightingale*
Stark County District Library Little Theatre Troupe
Cable Hall, Cultural Center for the Arts, Canton, Ohio

54. April 1, 2009
*An Evening with George Takei*
Players Guild Theatre, Cultural Center for the Arts, Canton, Ohio

55. April 3 – 4, 2009
*Japanese Dances*
Canton Ballet Japanese Choreographer Performance
Palace Theatre, Canton, Ohio

56. April 3 – 4, 2009
"Kimono My House"
Annual Art is Alive event, Japanese Theme
Cultural Center for the Arts, Canton, Ohio

57. April 5, 2009
*KimonoFest: Kumihimo (Japanese braiding) by The Lace Enclave*
Cultural Center for the Arts, Canton, Ohio

58. April 5, 2009
*KimonoFest: Japanese Embroidery and Temari Balls Demonstration by the Canton Chapter of the Embroidery Guild of America*
Cultural Center for the Arts, Canton, Ohio

59. April 7, 2009
Japanese Steakhouse Cooking Class
Loretta Paganini School of Cooking, Fisher Foods (grocery store), North Canton, Ohio

60. April 11, 2009
Japanese Tea Ceremonies, on the half hour
Canton Museum of Art
61. April 11, 2009
KimonoFest: Storigami (Japanese story and origami)*
Cultural Center for the Arts, Canton, Ohio

62. April 12, 2009
Japanese Tea Ceremonies, on the half hour
Canton Museum of Art

63. April 18, 2009
Madame Butterfly Workshop with M. J. Albacete
Canton Museum of Art

64. April 18, 2009
KimonoFest: Sumi-e (painting) & Shodo (calligraphy) Demonstration*
Cultural Center for the Arts, Canton, Ohio

65. April 18, 2009
KimonoFest: Children’s Kite Workshop*
Cultural Center for the Arts, Canton, Ohio

66. April 18, 2009
Children’s Asian Textile Workshop by Cleveland Museum of Art
Cultural Center for the Arts, Canton, Ohio

67. April 19, 2009
KimonoFest: Furoshiki (Japanese Gift Wrapping) Demonstration*
Cultural Center for the Arts, Canton, Ohio

68. April 25, 2009
KimonoFest: Bonsai Demonstration and Display*
Akron Canton Bonsai Society
Cultural Center for the Arts, Canton, Ohio

69. April 25, 2009
Madame Butterfly by the Canton Symphony Orchestra
Umstadt Hall, McKinley High School, Canton, Ohio

70. April 26, 2009
KimonoFest: Bonsai Display*
Akron Canton Bonsai Society
Cultural Center for the Arts, Canton, Ohio

71. April 26, 2009
Come Fly a Kite! Kimono Children’s Closing Festival
Canton Country Day School, Canton, Ohio
APPENDIX D
KIMONO AS ART INTERVIEWEES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date of Interview</th>
<th>Age Category</th>
<th>Ethnic Identity</th>
<th>Place of Birth</th>
<th>Place of Residence</th>
<th>Length of Residence in Ohio</th>
<th>Role in Kimono as Art</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kumi Day</td>
<td>3/29/10</td>
<td>Mid-40's</td>
<td>Japanese (U.S. Citizen)</td>
<td>Hiroshima, Japan</td>
<td>Canton, Ohio</td>
<td>20 yrs +</td>
<td>Co-Chair, Kimono Leadership Committee, Japanese Consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toshie Kenney</td>
<td>3/29/10</td>
<td>Mid-30's</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Canton, Ohio</td>
<td>15 yrs +</td>
<td>Volunteer, assisted with tea ceremony, kimono dressing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beverly Kereman</td>
<td>3/31/10</td>
<td>Mid-50's</td>
<td>Japanese American</td>
<td>Cleveland, Ohio</td>
<td>Cleveland, Ohio</td>
<td>50 yrs +</td>
<td>Head Coordinator, Sho-Jo-Ji Dance troupe; assisted with K-12 teacher workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nanci Taketa</td>
<td>3/31/10</td>
<td>Mid-50's</td>
<td>Japanese American</td>
<td>Cleveland, Ohio</td>
<td>Cleveland, Ohio</td>
<td>50 yrs +</td>
<td>Assistant Coordinator, Sho-Jo-Ji Dance troupe; assisted with K-12 teacher workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pam Souza</td>
<td>3/31/10</td>
<td>Mid-40's</td>
<td>Japanese American/Blacial</td>
<td>Cleveland, Ohio</td>
<td>Stow, Ohio</td>
<td>35 yrs +</td>
<td>Member of Sho-Jo-Ji Dance troupe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naoka Oyabu-Mathis</td>
<td>Email correspondence through Sept. 2012</td>
<td>Mid-50's</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Akron, Ohio</td>
<td>35 yrs +</td>
<td>Assisted with Mount Union College Kimono as Art reception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous - female</td>
<td>Email correspondence through Sept. 2012</td>
<td>Mid-60's</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Canton, Ohio</td>
<td>35 yrs +</td>
<td>Assisted with Mount Union College Kimono as Art reception</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date of Interview</th>
<th>Age Category</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Length of Time in Position</th>
<th>Place of Residence</th>
<th>Role In Kimono As Art</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M. J. &quot;Al&quot; Albacete</td>
<td>3/25/10</td>
<td>Mid-70's</td>
<td>Director, Canton Museum of Art</td>
<td>Since 1975</td>
<td>Canton, Ohio</td>
<td>Co-Chair, Kimono Leadership Committee, Spokesperson, Canton Museum of Art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Byrne</td>
<td>3/25/10</td>
<td>Mid-40's</td>
<td>Marketing Manager, Canton Museum of Art</td>
<td>Since 2008</td>
<td>Canton, Ohio</td>
<td>Assisted with Marketing/PR (which was mostly handled by ArtsinStark)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robb Hankins</td>
<td>3/29/10</td>
<td>Mid-50's</td>
<td>CEO, ArtsinStark</td>
<td>Since 2005</td>
<td>Canton, Ohio</td>
<td>Co-Chair, Kimono Leadership Committee, Spokesperson for ArtsinStark</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX E
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
ARTSINSTARK/CANTON MUSEUM OF ART EMPLOYEES

Name

Position

Years in position

What was your role during *Kimono as Art*?

When did the initial idea for this exhibition arise?

How did the idea of creating *KimonoFest* and additional affiliated Japanese cultural events arise?

How did other local cultural organizations get involved? Were they encouraged to create events or did they voluntarily create the related cultural events?

How was it determined as to which events could be affiliated with the *Kimono as Art* exhibition? Was there any sort of review process?

Were there any events that were denied the opportunity to be affiliated with the exhibition?

Were there grants offered for events? How much?

What was the role of the Kimono Leadership Committee? What was your role on the committee?

What sort of audience demographic do you think the *Kimono as Art* and *KimonoFest* organizers had in mind, if any?

What were your goals for the exhibition and events? What did you want people to take away from the experience? What did you hope they would learn?

How did the Japanese and Japanese Americans who were involved with the *Kimono as Art* events become involved?

How involved were Japanese/Japanese Americans in the process of planning the events that were organized by ArtsinStark?
The talk by Monica Sone and the talk by George Takei gave the audience some insight into the Japanese American internment story—why do you think this was an important story to tell with *Kimono as Art*?

Why do you think people were so interested in *Kimono as Art* exhibition and events? What do you think drew them in? Why are people in Canton so interested in Japanese culture?

Was there a concentrated effort to focus specifically on Japanese “traditional” culture as opposed to contemporary culture?

What do you think made this exhibition successful?

Do you expect there will be similar cultural/ethnographic exhibitions & events in the future? Will you be pursuing the creation of collaborative exhibitions/events with multiple organizations again in the future?

Has there been other Asian/Asian American cultural events held in Canton prior to *Kimono as Art*?

*Kimono as Art* was an extremely important exhibition in Canton—how do you think it affected the Canton community?

Canton Arts revival--what does this do for the community? Positive/Negative aspects?

What did you personally take away from the exhibition? Did you feel you learned something new about Japanese culture?
APPENDIX F
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR JAPANESE/JAPANESE AMERICAN PARTICIPANTS
IN-PERSON INTERVIEWS

Name/Age

Marital status/Children

Place of Birth:

How long have you lived in Ohio?

If not originally from Ohio, how did you end up in Ohio?

If applicable, what generation Japanese American?

Are you connected with other Japanese/Japanese Americans within your community?

What sort of organizations/events do you participate in with other Japanese/Japanese Americans? (i.e., church, class, community organization)

Are you aware or connected to any other Asian American groups within the community?

How do you feel about living as a Japanese/Japanese American in Ohio?

Have you experienced any problems with racism in your community?

How often do you visit museums?

Do you feel there has been adequate representation of Asians & Asian Americans at the museums you have visited?

How did you become involved with *Kimono as Art*? Who approached you and asked you to participate?

What *Kimono as Art* events did you participate in?

Were you given any direction as to what to present/do for the events in which you participated?

For events/demonstrations you participated in, what did you hope the audience would take away after viewing or participating in the event/demonstration?

What other *Kimono as Art* events did you attend?
What did you like about these events?

Was there anything that you did not like about these events?

What else would you have liked to see (additional events, workshops, demonstrations?) instituted as a part of the *Kimono as Art* events?

Did you hear of any events that you felt would be problematic?

Do you feel that these Japanese cultural events were effective in showing the audience/viewers Japanese culture?

What are your feelings about the American fascination with Japan & Japanese culture?

Why do you think there is this fascination with Japanese culture? Why now?
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