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**CELEBRATING HAWAII'S ICONIC ALFRED SHAHEEN:
HOW A FABRIC PRINT BECAME A LIFESTYLE
Exhibit Showcases Alfred Shaheen's Fusion Fashion Legacy**



Tahitian Girl' dress
by Alfred Shaheen



Joss Sticks Fabric (detail)
by Alfred Shaheen



Pink Hibiscus
Designed by Carol Kamaile
Appliquéd & quilted by
Linda Orion



*Waipuhia:
The Upside Down Waterfall*
By Wendeanne Ke'aka Stitt
Courtesy of Snyderman
Works Gallery

SAN JOSE, Calif., March 16, 2010 – *Hawaii's Alfred Shaheen: Fabric to Fashion*, a new exhibition opening at the San Jose Museum of Quilts & Textiles May 18, 2010, is a celebration of the legacy of textile designer and master fabric printer Alfred Shaheen, the origins of the Hawaiian print and the fusion fashion aesthetic it spawned. This is the first major retrospective exhibition of Hawaiian textiles and aloha wear manufactured by Alfred Shaheen on the island of Oahu over a 40-year period. The opening reception, free with admission, is Sunday, May 23, 2:00-4:00pm.

Hawaii's Alfred Shaheen: Fabric to Fashion is co-curated by Museum curator Deborah Corsini and Hawaiian textile scholar Dr. Linda Arthur, and will feature 100+ objects drawn from the collection of Camille Shaheen-Tunberg, Alfred Shaheen's daughter. Stunning yardage representing the textile designs Shaheen produced and key examples of the men's, women's and children's garments that visually conjure Hawaii's complex cultural history will fill all three Museum galleries. In addition to textiles, the exhibit will showcase archival photos and ads that illuminate how the textiles and garments were designed, manufactured and marketed.

Alfred Shaheen wed technological innovation to socially responsible business practices in the service of revitalizing Pacific Island/Asian textile traditions to forge a fusion fashion design aesthetic now recognized worldwide as a visual marker--not only of a transnational Hawaiian culture--but of a West Coast "American" lifestyle that is informal, environmentally aware and multi-cultural. A Lebanese immigrant/engineer, Shaheen pioneered a silk-screening method, professionally trained his employees who were Hawaiian, Japanese, Chinese and other ethnicities as Shaheen's City of Craftsmen, and mined the visual iconography of Hawaii's multi-ethnic community to create a new design aesthetic.

"This show will transport you to a tropical paradise," said Corsini. "Shaheen's designs are an exuberant profusion of color, pattern and sophisticated compositions and capture the lushness of a tropical climate and the spirit of exotic cultures of the Pacific islands."

Adds co-curator Dr. Linda Arthur, "Hawaiian textile art, especially designs from the 1940s and 50s, have a quality unsurpassed in other decades. Shaheen championed the idea of using Hawaiian textile art as a means of expressing ethnicity and, as an innovative businessman, employed artists as salaried employees and was the first to use modern fashion promotion and marketing on the Islands."

Also opening May 18, 2010 is *Grand Appliqué: Hawaiian Quilts*, featuring traditional Hawaiian quilts made and designed by master quilter Carol Kamaile and her students. Quilting was introduced to Hawaii in 1820 by missionaries who brought appliqué quilting to the islands. The familiar Hawaiian appliqué quilt style, known for its graphic, symmetrical designs, nature-inspired imagery and unique construction methods, soon evolved. The tradition is still very much alive today as illustrated by Kamaile's inspired interpretations of this form.

A third Hawaiian-inspired exhibition also opens on May 18, 2010, *Wendeanne Ke'aka Stitt: Contemporary Kapa*, a selection of contemporary works by the Santa Cruz artist Wendeanne Ke'aka Stitt that draws inspiration from the Hawaiian kapa cloth tradition. Kapa is a native Hawaiian textile made from the bast fibers of certain species of trees and shrubs. Wendeanne Ke'aka Stitt's contemporary work keeps this labor-intensive tradition alive in her cloth made of pounded bark from the paper mulberry tree which she combines with quilting to create unique graphic textiles pieces. Also on view will be a selection of traditional kapa cloths from the Museum's permanent collection.

Exhibition-Related Programming:

East Meets West: Cultural Influence in Shaheen's Textile Designs, with Linda Arthur, Ph.D., May 23, 2010, 1-2pm. Through textile art designed for clothing used in both Hawaii and the mainland US, Alfred Shaheen brought the art of Asia to the West by innovating Western-styled garments with ethnic textile designs. \$15, \$10 members and students. Tickets available at www.sjqquiltmuseum.org/calendar or call 408.971.0323 x14.

Gallery Walkthrough with Dr. Linda Arthur, May 23, 2010, 2:30 pm. Part of opening reception; free with Museum admission; no reservation required.

Hawaiian Shirt-making Class Associated with these exhibitions Eddie's Quilting Bee will be offering introductory Hawaiian shirt-making classes with sessions in April, June and July. Details at www.sjqquiltmuseum.org/calendar.

The Museum of Quilts & Textiles was the first museum in the United States dedicated to quilts and textiles as an art form. In 2005 San Jose Mercury News named the Museum one of the top 10 attractions in San Jose. Museum and Museum Store hours are: 10:00am-5:00pm Tuesday through Sunday; closed Mondays and major holidays. Admission is \$8.00 general; \$6.50 students and seniors; and free to Museum members and children under 13. Admission is free on the first Friday of each month. The Museum of Quilts & Textiles is located at 520 South First Street in downtown San Jose. For more information, call 408-971-0323 or visit www.sjqquiltmuseum.org.

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This exhibition is co-presented by: Halau Napuaokamokihana'ohaikapolioluana, Hui'Ilima of Santa Clara County, Japantown Business Association, Kawailehua Hula Ohana, Nikkei Matsuri, Sak n' Sak and Yu-Ai Kai