

‘Mooltan’ reversible furnishing fabric, attributed to Christopher Dresser, for Liberty & Co. c. 1880

This Liberty & Co. ‘Art Fabric’ uses Japanese-style medallions filled with ferns and pine-needle motifs on a fretwork ground, in red and white.

Christopher Dresser was a designer who visited Japan in the 1870s.

Mamiko Markham’s research for this project has started to reveal more about the ways in which he influenced – and was influenced by – Japanese katagami stencils.

ST3600

Textile with Japanese design of irises by Arthur Silver for Liberty & Co, 1891

This textile is an example of indigo-discharge printing on cotton, with a Japanese-inspired design of irises on a white ground. The Silver Studio sold the design for this dress fabric to Liberty & Co in July 1891 for 3 guineas.

Unlike other designers such as Christopher Dresser, Arthur Silver never visited Japan himself. But he was an avid collector of Japanese materials, including the katagami stencils shown in this exhibition.

ST918

Katagami stencil with pattern of 'Hujiwa-ni-Chô', wreaths of Japanese wisteria and butterflies, 1850-1890

Japanese katagami stencils were used to apply patterns to kimono cloth. They were used for the informal, everyday clothing of the well-off urban population in Japan until the nineteenth century.

K2.62

Offprint of katagami stencil with pattern of 'Hujiwa-ni-Chô', wreaths of Japanese wisteria and butterflies, c. 1890

Katagami stencils are part of a technique of resist dyeing known as *katazome*. Rice paste is applied to fabric through the stencil. The pattern is achieved by selectively preventing colour reaching parts of the fabric when the fabric is dyed in a vat. The Silver Studio's designers did not understand this technique and simply brushed colour through the stencil on to paper.

KO2.62

Bordered design of wreaths and flowers, Silver Studio, 1892

This Silver Studio design for a textile uses motifs influenced by katagami stencil patterns. It shows the way that the Silver Studio incorporated Japanese ideas into designs intended for British customers.

SD2588

Katagami stencil design of hydrangeas and flowers, possibly plum blossom, within roundels against a background of fine crossing vines, 1850-1890

Infra-red photography undertaken during this project has revealed the stamp on this katagami stencil.

In the nineteenth century, katagami stencils were variously marked with black ink stamps of the maker or trader, or showed the quality level and the indigo studio.

Investigating these stamps has formed a central part of Mamiko Markham's research.



K2.77

Katagami stencil with a geometric design based on concentric squares with central patterning of crosses and swastikas, 1850-1890

In traditional Japanese culture, the patterning of fabric offered people a great opportunity for personal expression. Patterns might contain wishes for good fortune, or evoke traditional legends, perhaps also associating the wearer with the heroes of a story. They might also hide puns or jokes in their design, or simply reflect the time of year or the weather.

Swastikas (manji) are a Buddhist symbol of wellbeing and represent virtue in the Japanese tradition.

K2.79

Katagami stencil with a geometric design of shokkō (linked octagons and squares) containing hanabishi (diamond shaped flowers) and an imitation tie dye technique (kumo shibori), 1850-1890

The outline of the geometric pattern imitates a tie dye technique - *ori-nui shibori*. The design includes irregular breaks across its surface which contain small scattered circles.

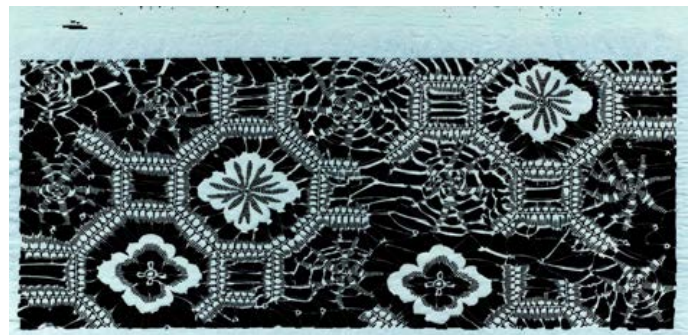
The small slit at the top left of the stencil is a Cut out sign or *Gara boshi* that indicates that it should be paired with another stencil to complete the printed design. Mamiko Markham's research has enabled us to understand that many of the Silver Studio katagami are part of paired sets.

K2.96

The pair to this stencil is K2.69



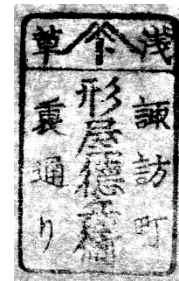
The combined design print would look like this:



Ine (Rice plants) or Inazuka pattern (Bundle of rice plants) Katagami stencil, 1840 - 1867

This katagami features a pattern representing the hope that autumn will bring a bumper harvest. It is said that rice plants can house a Shinto God, and act as a charm against evil. In Japan, people decorate with rice plants and offer rice dumplings to honour the moon for the grain harvest in September.

This stencil bears the merchant stamp of Kataya Tokubei, (形屋徳衛兵) a katagami merchant from Asakusa in the Edo region of Japan. Mamiko's research suggests this dates from between 1840 and 1867, the period known as the 'golden age' of katagami making in Japan.



The signature of the dyer who bought the stencil from Katya Tokubei, is also visible, probably as a reference for the next purchase.



This stencil is made using a push carving technique (*tsukibori*). Tsukibori is a method whereby the craftsman cuts through the layers of the stencil paper by pushing the tip of the stencilling knife away from him or herself. The three other main techniques are drill cutting (*kiribori*), punch cutting (*dōgubori*), and stripe cutting (*shimabori*).

K1.1

Katagami stencil with a design of maple leaves, 1840 - 1867

The patterns on Japanese kimonos were traditionally supposed to be appropriate to the season. Maple leaves are a typical pattern for clothing worn in Autumn.

This stencil bears a merchant stamp which may be that of Kataya Tokubei, (形屋徳衛兵), a katagami merchant in Asakusa in Edo, Japan.

K2.84



Katagami stencil, 1850-1890

Katagami stencil with butterflies and stylised flowers including chrysanthemums and wisteria forming, and contained within, a design of linked circles. This pattern is known as shippō 七宝 and is thought to refer to Seven Treasures mentioned in Buddhist texts. The circle represents harmony, and the pattern is considered a sign of future success.

K2.78

Katagami stencil with an all-over design of undulating lines, 1850-1890

Katagami need to be strong enough to withstand having rice paste scraped over them, and being repeatedly lifted and replaced along the length of fabric. In designs that have large areas of paper cut away, a mesh of fine silk supporting threads (*ito-ire*) was sometimes sandwiched between the layers of the stencil paper to reinforce the stencil structure.

K1.13

Mermaid in water, distemper on woven jute, 1895

This is a cover for a catalogue of stencil samples for the Rottman/Silver stencil exhibition in 1895. Arthur Silver developed a new technique for stenciling wallcoverings, probably inspired by katagami stencils.

Silver developed a business partnership with Alexander Rottmann, in the early 1890s, making stencilled wall coverings. Rottmann was a businessman and importer of Japanese products, as well as an avid collector of Japanese items.

SE602

Caroline Collinge found the inspiration for her film 'Waves' from the wave-like patterns of some of the katagami stencils – like the one you can see here, and also from the watery theme of the mermaid stencil on the Rottmann-Silver catalogue.