

# The New York Times

**ART & DESIGN**

## Takahiro Iwasaki, 'In Focus'

By HOLLAND COTTER MARCH 19, 2015



A detail of Takahiro Iwasaki's "Out of Disorder (Folding Scenery)," part of the "In Focus" program at Asia Society. Leise Hook/Asia Society

*Asia Society*

*725 Park Avenue, at 70th Street*

*Through April 26*

Cotter, Holland. "Takahiro Iwasaki, 'In Focus'" *The New York Times*, March 19, 2015.

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Takahiro Iwasaki, born in 1975 in Hiroshima, Japan, has a lacemaker's hand, a jeweler's eye and a shopper's instinct for cool materials. He's the current participant in Asia Society's "In Focus" program, a series of small solo shows for which artists create new work often based on objects from the society's collection. Mr. Iwasaki's source of inspiration is a magnificent 17th-century Japanese six-panel folding screen called "Flowers and Grasses of the Four Seasons," and his response is an unconventional sculptural version of it.

The piece, titled "Out of Disorder (Folding Scenery)," is made almost entirely of kimonos — robes traditionally printed with seasonal images — folded and stacked inside clear plastic display cases. From the garments, layered like geological strata, the artist has pulled out individual colored threads, which he weaves into upright, three-dimensional landscape elements that refer both to times of the year and to changes in Japanese history and culture.

The thread landscape corresponding to the screen's spring panel is filled with bright-colored woven flowers; in the display case devoted to autumn, the flowers become dandelions, puffy, gray and gone to seed. Unlike the painted screen, Mr. Iwasaki's piece is dominated by architectural forms. Electrical and cellphone towers rise over a black pagoda. Construction cranes like those being used to revive the tsunami-ravaged, radiation-plagued city of Fukushima dwarf a single tiny pine tree that survived the disaster and has become a symbol of Japanese resilience. The 17th-century screen was meant to prompt reflections on evanescence and cyclical return. Mr. Iwasaki's exquisite show, organized by Michelle Yun of Asia Society, gives a far less certain vision of renewal, but still has hope built in.

## **HOLLAND COTTER**

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