

## The Blues

EXHIBITION AT THE TEXTILE MUSEUM OF CANADA

July 25, 2007 - April 6, 2008

Curated by Patricia Bentley

**Opening reception:** Wednesday July 25, 6:30 – 8:00 pm. Remarks at 6:45 pm.

Exhibition Sponsor:

INTERIOR FURNISHINGS LTD.  
PRIMAVERA

Media Sponsor:



Generously supported by:

The Anne Angus Contemporary  
Program Fund

Imperial Tobacco Canada Foundation

TORONTO – July, 2007. Reflecting on the symbolism of colour, the globalizing effects of denim and the haunting sounds of blues music, *The Blues* tells both the ancient and contemporary story of blue.

In *The Blues*, 36 textiles in our permanent collection from West Africa, East Asia and Canada, along with Canadian denim jeans and Japanese pieces lent from private collections, join works by six contemporary artists: **Mary Lee Bendolph (Gee's Bend)**, **Dorothy Caldwell**, **Judith Fielder**, **Léola Le Blanc**, **Chunghie Lee** and **Anna Torma**, whose working methodologies are embedded in concepts of blue.

*The Blues* examines the powerful symbolism of a colour and a dye that has been viewed with suspicion and called “**the devil’s dye**”. Yet blue is also considered emblematic of **wealth and power**, as in West Africa; **protective against poisonous insects and snakes**, as in Japan; and even **effective medicinally**, as in many parts of Africa and East Asia. The mystique of the colour blue, beautiful, elusive, reflecting the sky and the sea, pervades human life and cultures around the world. In *The Blues*, you are **invited to sample the many shades and tastes of blue**.

Indigo is an age-old and up-to-the-minute colouring agent for textiles – familiar to people around the world in the many shades of ubiquitous **denim blue jeans**. Originally a uniform for gold-miners, denim became a symbol of youthful protest in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and now marks the trend towards globalization in the 21<sup>st</sup>. *The Blues* follows the transition of this wardrobe staple from its inception to present day where the demand for blue jeans is more than one billion pairs – annually.

Just as blue denim has become a worldwide uniform, crossing social and cultural boundaries, “the blues” colours an emotional mood and haunts the airwaves as the **originator of popular western music**. Author Richard Wright called blues music the sensualization of suffering. He captured a key theme of this exhibition. The blues in music form and the blues in textile form are modes of communication understood through the senses.

-30 -

For additional information, interviews or images:

Contact Beth Sharpe at 416-599-5321 x2239 or email [bethsharpe@textilemuseum.ca](mailto:bethsharpe@textilemuseum.ca)

Textile Museum of Canada  
55 Centre Avenue (Dundas & University)  
Toronto, ON M5G 2H5  
T (416) 599-5321 F (416) 599-2911  
[www.textilemuseum.ca](http://www.textilemuseum.ca)  
Transit: St. Patrick Station

### Museum Hours

Open 7 days a week 11 am – 5 pm  
Wednesdays 11 am – 8 pm



Canada Council  
for the Arts  
Conseil des Arts  
du Canada



torontodartscouncil  
An arm's length body of the City of Toronto

**Kidsummer**

**Tuesday August 14, 2007, 1:00 – 4:00 pm**

Bring the family and get the blues embroidering designs on fabric and adding sparkle with beads inspired by the beautiful fabrics featured in the *The Blues* exhibition.

*Free for children under 12 and adults with children.*

**Material Witness Lecture Series: Chunghie Lee**

**Co-sponsored with the Ontario College of Art & Design**

**Presented with the support of the Jean A. Chalmers Fund for the Crafts**

**Friday November 23, 2007, 6:30 pm**

*This lecture takes place at the Ontario College of Art & Design Auditorium, 100 McCaul Street.*

*Free admission. Please arrive early, seating is limited.*

**Workshop: Pojagi with Chunghie Lee**

**Saturday November 24 and Sunday November 25, 2007, 10:00 am – 3:00 pm**

*Members \$120, Non-members \$144, Full-time students \$80. Materials \$20. Advance registration is required, class size is limited. To register, call 416-599-5321 x2221.*

**Curator's Tours**

**Wednesday October 10, 2007 and January 23, 2008, 6:30 pm**

*Free with admission.*

**Music Performance: Aaron Davis and Suzie Vinnick play the blues**

**Wednesday January 9, 2008, 6:30 pm**

*Members \$12, Non-members \$15, Full-time students Pay-What-You-Can.*

*Tickets may be purchased at the TMC's front desk. Please arrive early, seating is limited.*

**Lecture: Rob Bowman interprets the blues**

**Wednesday November 14, 2007, 6:30 pm**

Join Dr. Rob Bowman, Associate Professor of Ethnomusicology at York University, for an informed and entertaining look at blues music.

*Members \$8, Non-members \$10, Full-time students Pay-What-You-Can.*

*Tickets may be purchased at the TMC's front desk. Please arrive early, seating is limited.*

**Artist Talk: Dorothy Caldwell**

**Friday February 8, 2008 6:30 pm.**

*Members \$8, Non-members \$10, Full-time students Pay-What-You-Can.*

*Tickets may be purchased at the TMC's front desk. Please arrive early, seating is limited.*

**Workshop: Dyeing the Blues with Dorothy Caldwell**

**Saturday February 9 and Sunday February 10, 2008, 10:00 am – 3:00 pm**

**Presented in partnership with the Contemporary Textile Studio Co-op**

*Members \$120, Non-members \$144, Full-time students \$80. Materials \$20. Advance registration is required, class size is limited. To register, call 416-599-5321 x2221.*

**Lecture: Buseje Bailey**

**Wednesday February 20, 2008, 6:30 pm**

*Buseje Bailey, artist and lecturer/instructor, will give a talk on the retention of African elements in Diasporic art.*

*Members \$8, Non-members \$10, Full-time students Pay-What-You-Can.*

*Tickets may be purchased at the TMC's front desk. Please arrive early, seating is limited.*

---

Textile Museum of Canada  
55 Centre Avenue (Dundas & University)  
Toronto, ON M5G 2H5  
T (416) 599-5321 F (416) 599-2911  
www.textilemuseum.ca  
Transit: St. Patrick Station

**Museum Hours**

Open 7 days a week 11 am – 5 pm  
Wednesdays 11 am – 8 pm



Canada Council  
for the Arts

Conseil des Arts  
du Canada



THE ONTARIO  
TRILLIUM  
FOUNDATION  
LA FONDATION  
TRILLIUM  
DE L'ONTARIO



40 YEARS OF  
ARTS  
ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL  
CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO

torontodartscouncil  
An arm's length body of the City of Toronto