



JAYME GRZEBIAK

URBAN GARDENER

Raised beds are a platform for horticultural therapy >> D3

ALOHA

FRIDAY FOR JAPAN

The Aloha for Japan fundraising campaign in support of victims of the recent earthquake and tsunami will take over Tamarind Park from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Friday, when American Savings Bank, Bank of Hawaii, Central Pacific Bank and First Hawaiian Bank will team up to distribute "Aloha for Japan" T-shirts for a minimum \$20 donation and collect funds for the relief efforts. Local radio personality and comedian Lanai Tabura will serve as emcee for the fundraiser, with entertainment by Christian Yrizarry of Ho'onu'a and reggae band Beach 5. Donations collected at the event will go to the Hawaii State Chapter of the American Red Cross and the Japan-America Society of Hawaii. For a list of more relief events, visit honolulupulse.com. — Star-Advertiser

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Aloha for the World

Colorful work by local fashion pioneer Alfred Shaheen comes alive in a traveling exhibit and in new reproductions

BY NINA WU

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Alfred Shaheen, the man responsible for bringing aloha wear and textiles to the wider world, is the subject of a traveling exhibit heading to Washington state this week.

The "Hawaii's Alfred Shaheen: Fabric to Fashion" exhibit at Washington State University showcases the diversity of Hawaiian textile designs he created during his lifetime and celebrates the man, his vision and his clothes, which are now considered wearable art, according to Linda Arthur Bradley, co-curator of the exhibit.

Bradley, a professor of apparel, merchandising, design and textiles at WSU and a scholar of Hawaiian textiles, credits the late Shaheen with creating a modern fashion industry in 1950s Hawaii. What made him stand out, though, was his celebration of the state's various ethnic cultures, which he incorporated into his designs at a time when most people were trying to assimilate.

"People were able to communicate their love of different cultures through these designs," said Bradley, who discovered Shaheen when she was a professor at the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

Most of the exhibit comes from Shaheen's daughter, Camille Shaheen-Tunberg, who has been collecting her father's works since the late '90s as a way to document family history. She was able to work closely with him on documenting his pieces in the last 10 years of his life. Shaheen died in 2008 at the age of 86.

Altogether, there are more than 100 pieces in the exhibit — from tex-

tiles to aloha shirts and figure-flattering dresses.

"He was very passionate about authentic culture. He loved all the cultures and combined them all and brought them to people," his daughter said. "In the show you see this."

Arabic, Chinese, Indian, Samoan, Hawaiian and African imagery, as well as florals, underwater scenes and a blend of East and West were part of his legacy, she said.



Alfred Shaheen

A Lebanese immigrant who studied aeronautical engineering, Shaheen returned from the Army Air Corps after World War II to work in the family's garment business on Oahu. But he wanted to expand by building a manufacturing plant so he could control every step of the process, from design to finished product.

Unlike most apparel makers who used existing art as inspiration, Shaheen dispatched his designers to far-flung places like Tahiti, India and China to sketch motifs and patterns that were then transferred into fabric designs using new techniques and new dyes, including metallics.

Within 10 years of launching his business, Shaheen was producing textiles worth about \$35 million annually in today's dollars, according to Bradley.

"He was an innovator in manufacturing, design, marketing and promotions," she said. "This guy had it all covered."

Original Shaheen pieces today command hundreds to thousands of dollars on eBay and etsy.com. A silky, rayon aloha shirt, for instance, starts at \$1,500.

The colorful textiles can be seen in many places — on the outdoor um-

Please see Shaheen, D3



PHOTOS COURTESY CAMILLE SHAHEEN-TUNBERG

These are some of the designs contained in the exhibit "Hawaii's Alfred Shaheen: Fabric to Fashion" opening Thursday at Washington State University.



home work

Shaheen: Reproductions celebrate aloha wear designs

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brellas at Huggo's on the Big Island and outdoor furniture at Oahu homes. Reyn's still carries the Alfred Shaheen collection.

To extend her father's legacy, Shaheen-Tunberg is making many of his prints available through various licensing agreements. "The prints just transcend beautifully from when they were created in the '40s and '50s," she said. "There are so many uses for Shaheen prints."

Through Duralee's Suburban Home, Shaheen's Surf N Sand prints are reproduced on indoor-outdoor fabrics for upholstery, decorative cushions and umbrellas. The prints are also available as lamps, plateware, quilting

fabric and, coming soon, rugs and stationery.

Johnny Mango at the Gentry Pacific Design Center carries Shaheen's Surf N Sand indoor-outdoor fabrics. Prices start at \$35 a yard, and they're very popular, according to owner Brett Sowell.

The exhibit, which started its tour in California at the San Jose Museum of Quilts and Textiles before traveling to Michigan and Washington, will open at WSU on Thursday and run through May 3.

It will head to the Maui Arts & Cultural Center in September. Bradley hopes to be able to bring the collection to Honolulu next year, which she said would be an appropriate homecoming.



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Info on Shaheen prints & decor can be found at:

- >> www.alfredshaheen.com
>> www.duralee.com (fabrics)
>> www.precidio.com (plateware)
>> www.seascapelamps.com (lamps)

Shaheen indoor-outdoor fabrics are available at:
>> Johnny Mango, Gentry Pacific Design Center, 560 N. Nimitz Hwy, Suite 118, 536-2300