



ANDRA E STANTON

Foreword by  
Josephine Stealey

# DIMENSIONAL CLOTH

Sculpture by Contemporary Textile Artists

"A happy combination of overview and fine detail...a fantastic addition."

—Junco Sato Pollack

Mariko Kusumoto is a textile artist who grew up in Japan and now lives in the United States in Massachusetts. She creates ethereal flowers and baubles of extraordinary translucency and elegance, exemplified by her piece *Blue and Green Necklace*. Many hold within them another equally exquisite formation. Kusumoto is a physical artist—someone who makes the process of construction central to her creativity—but she's also a dreamer; her works are fantastical re-interpretations of natural phenomena.

Kusumoto was inclined toward art from a young age and majored in art in high school. As an adult, her early sculptures were of metal, as evidenced by *Hinamatsuri* and *Tokyo Souvenir Exterior/Interior*. She recalls, “[I]n 2013, after completing a very involved and technically challenging metal piece, I felt the need to move away from representational imagery and do more abstract and organic work, and with a different material. The result is my fabric sculpture. I like the softness and atmospheric qualities of the fabrics I use.”

When Kusumoto returned to Japan for vacation, she discovered tsumami zaiku, a fabric-making technique developed during the country's Edo period, from 1603 to 1867. “The flowers were made into hair ornaments that women would wear with kimono. I was fascinated and inspired by this simple origami-like technique that transforms small fabric squares into complex and beautiful patterns.” She now uses this set of techniques to devise her flower sculptures, as seen in *Blue Flowers* and *Red Flowers*.

Mariko Kusumoto. *Blue and Green Necklace*, 2014.  
16" × 12" × 2". Polyester, monofilament. Courtesy of  
Mariko Kusumoto and Mobilia Gallery.

Mariko Kusumoto. *Blue and Green Necklace*, 2014.  
Detail. Courtesy of Mariko Kusumoto and Mobilia Gallery.





Although one day she might use metal again in her work, today Kusumoto enjoys focusing on composing airy and enigmatic fabric orbs, and orbs within orbs. Her *White Object 1* and *Necklace 2: Seascape with Coral* illustrate such shapes. She does this using heat-set techniques she has perfected during the past few years. Kusumoto notes, "Many of my pieces come from accidental discoveries. During the construction process, there is sometimes a breathtaking moment when something unexpected happens. I catch those moments and develop my ideas from them."

Kusumoto has been inspired by the work of other artists—in particular, Japanese avant-garde artist Yayoi Kusama, whose work showed alongside Andy Warhol in New York galleries during the 1960s and who favored eye-popping colors and over-the-top design, as well as Finnish designer Majja Isola, who helped produce the bold fabrics of Marimekko. Yet, Kusumoto's own sensibility could not be more different. Where those two artists went big and aggressive, she aims for the personal and quietly revelatory.


**OPPOSITE**

Mariko Kusumoto. *Hinamatsuri*, 2001. 22" × 12" × 12". Nickel, silver, copper, brass, sterling silver, steel, mirror. Courtesy of Mobilia Gallery. Photography: M. Lee Fetherree.

**ABOVE RIGHT**

Mariko Kusumoto. *Tokyo Souvenir Exterior*, 2008. 7.5" × 9.5" × 8.5" (closed). Nickel silver, sterling silver, brass, copper, resin, decal, found objects. Courtesy of Mobilia Gallery. Photography: Dean Powell.

**ABOVE**

Mariko Kusumoto. *Tokyo Souvenir Interior*, 2008. 7.5" × 35" × 20" (open). Courtesy of Mobilia Gallery. Photography: Dean Powell.

## RIGHT

Mariko Kusumoto. *Blue Flowers*, 2014.  
4.5" × 4.5" × 3". Silk, metal. Courtesy of  
Mariko Kusumoto and Mobilia Gallery.

## BELOW LEFT

Mariko Kusumoto. *Red Flowers*, 2014.  
4.5" × 4.5" × 3". Silk, metal. Courtesy of  
Mariko Kusumoto and Mobilia Gallery.

## BELOW RIGHT

Mariko Kusumoto. *Necklace 2: Seascape  
with Coral*, 2015. 12" × 12" × 4".  
Polyester, monofilament. Courtesy of  
Mariko Kusumoto and Mobilia Gallery.

## OPPOSITE TOP

Mariko Kusumoto. *Wall Piece*, 2016.  
4.5" × 4.5" × 2" (each). Polyester,  
monofilament. Courtesy of Mariko  
Kusumoto and Mobilia Gallery.

## OPPOSITE BOTTOM

Mariko Kusumoto. *Brooch 1*, 2016.  
4.5" × 4.5" × 2" each. Polyester,  
monofilament. Courtesy of Mariko  
Kusumoto and Mobilia Gallery.



For Kusumoto, art is a way to take observable natural phenomena that stimulate her and reconceive them. "I like to reorganize these images and transform them into objects that are surrealistic, amusing, or unexpected. And I like the idea of layers. When objects are embedded inside created space they generate a mysterious effect." Indeed, her work presents us with magical microcosms—complete imaginary worlds—such as those that can be detected in *Brooch 1* and *Wall Piece*. Kusumoto says, "I'm challenged to see how far I can go. I have so many ideas and I'm anxious to see the pieces in real life. They will be formations never seen before."

