

Joyce Kozloff: Cultural Center, Kurayoshi, Japan

Floor, Chubu Cultural Center and Pear Museum, Kurayoshi, Japan; Cesar Pelli & Associates, Inc., New Haven, Architects; fabricated by Kudo Haruya, Tokyo; photos Hirotaka Otsuji

Kurayoshi is the capital of Tottori Prefecture, and this cultural center, which contains a library, two concert halls and a pear museum, was funded by the Japanese central government. Its soaring lobby is especially notable for the traditional Japanese methods of woodwork utilized in its construction. The floor's leaf shape can best be viewed from a mezzanine balcony, from which it appears to have dropped off an invisible gigantic tree. It is a crazy quilt of juxtaposed shapes, rather like certain beautiful kimonos. Each shape is either a detail of an antique map of Tottori or a fragment of fabric.

Hirotaka Otsuji, the project architect in Cesar Pelli's Tokyo office, did archival research and provided early charts of the region, dating from 1633 to 1907. Their arabesques subtly evoke land and water in configurations quite different from the conventions of western cartography. Local Tottori textiles are interspersed throughout the overall scheme. Lake Tongo appears on every map; it has a sinuous, amoebic shape, which is instantly recognizable. All the maps were executed in marble mosaic, and the fabrics on sandblasted slabs of marble - a fortuitous marriage of matte against shiny, grisaille against polychrome, broad strokes against fine detail.