



**Above:** A gallery view showing a range of wedding garments. *Front, left to right:* Grey silk taffeta wedding ensemble (American, 1886) Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Jamison in memory of Francis Jeannetta Jamison | Halston brown velvet cape and sleeveless wedding dress (American, 1976) Gift of Joanna Bradbury | Embroidered wedding ensemble (sari and choli) (Indian, 1982) Gift of Mrs. Rohini Arter. *Back, left:* Men's embroidered silk gauze summer wedding robe (Chinese 19th century) Silverman/Rodgers Collection. *Back, right:* Embroidered red satin bridal ensemble (*long feng gua*) (Chinese, late 20th century), Stavropoulos Collection. *Rear wall:* Silk brocade bridal curtains (Chinese, 19th century)

**Above:** In Ghana, for special occasions, including weddings, men and women have their clothes custom made by tailors or dressmakers. At left, a man's three-piece wedding ensemble, worn again for special occasions with or without the outer garment. At right, a woman's skirt and top (*kaba and slit*), carefully crafted by a dressmaker for a perfect fit. Both outfits are of handwoven cloth with brocade. (Ghanaian, 2003) Loan from a Ghanaian couple

## Global Wedding Traditions

Although wedding traditions vary around the world, many of them focus on clothing and textiles. Kent State University Museum's current exhibit, *As the World Weds: Global Wedding Traditions*, draws from its rich holdings of wedding dresses and associated materials, as well as treasured pieces on loan from personal collections.

The exhibition looks beyond the prevalence of wearing a white bridal gown—which has its origins in Europe in the 19th century—and highlights the rich and deeply symbolic clothing and textiles linked to wedding ceremonies around the world. From bright red robes for the Chinese bride and groom to handwoven kente cloth for the happy couple in Ghana, colorful, handcrafted textiles represent wealth and material well-being.

"Wedding dresses are one of the things most frequently offered to the Kent State University Museum," says Sara Hume, PhD, professor and museum curator. "People treasure them and keep them for the rest of their lives. I felt it very important to showcase some of the amazing wedding dresses we have, but also to challenge the assumptions people have about wedding traditions. Traditions have actually changed significantly over time and differ across cultures, which this exhibition aims to show."

Though the bride's dress is often one of the central components of the ceremonies, there are many other participants in the festivities who have their own distinctive dress, including grooms, flower girls, mothers of the bride, members of the wedding party and invited guests.

After the wedding, many couples carefully store away the garments and other mementos from the celebration. The valuable memories linked to the festivities imbue these pieces with sentimental value and encourage their preservation and even donation to museums.

As the *World Weds* is on view Sept. 15, 2022, through Aug. 27, 2023, at the Kent State University Museum's Broadbent Gallery. The exhibition is made possible with the generous support of Mr. Robert A. and Dr. Susan H. Conrad, celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary; Regina and Gregg Eisenberg in honor of their 20th anniversary; and with additional funding from Leslie Royce Resnik and the Ohio Arts Council.

Visit the Kent State University Museum website at [www.kent.edu/museum/event/world-weds-global-wedding-traditions](http://www.kent.edu/museum/event/world-weds-global-wedding-traditions). Discover different sections of the exhibition at [astheworldweds.wordpress.com/](http://astheworldweds.wordpress.com/).