



Special Exhibition

The Tradition of Edo Creativity

The Skill and Soul of Craftsmen Give Birth to Japanese Beauty

Saturday, February 8, to Sunday, April 5
Special Exhibition Gallery, 1F

*Displays will be changed during the exhibition.



Food Containers Decorated with design of pine, bamboo and wisteria together with Wisteria and Hollyhock Crests in Maki-e on Nashiji Ground
18th century, Bardi Collection, Museum of Oriental Art in Venice.

In 2020, as the Tokyo Olympics/Paralympics draw near, Tokyo is the focus of world-wide interest. With *The Tradition of Edo Creativity*, the Edo-Tokyo Museum is proud to present a special exhibition with a topic that suits the games' daring spirit: the creativity that is the pride of Japan. The exhibition includes the first public display in Japan of artifacts from the Japanese collection of the Count of Bardi (from the Museum of Oriental Art in Venice), in addition to artifacts from the Edo-Tokyo Museum Collection. This exhibition spotlights the work and lives of craftsmen in Edo and Tokyo.

Section One: The Japan that the Count Adored — The First Exhibition of the Bardi Collection in Japan

In February 1889, a European nobleman, Enrico Carlo di Borbone, visited Japan. He bore the title Count of Parma and was a member of the illustrious Bourbon royal family. The Count of Bardi had made an extended trip to countries throughout the East; Japan was his stop. Here he purchased thousands of works of art and brought them back to Europe. These products of Japanese culture that the count collected are now in the Museum of Oriental Art in Venice and other museums.

Through the Bardi Collection, this part of the exhibition provides a view of the Japanese beauty that was the object of Westerners' desire.

Section Two: Craftsmen in the Samurai Capital

Edo, where the Tokugawa shoguns resided, flourished as a city of the samurai. Constructing and maintaining Edo Castle, the Tokugawa mausolea, and other major structures, symbolic and functional, required skilled craftsmen. Carpenters and others, led by master craftsmen working under the shogunate's direction, set to work on these projects. Creating the furniture and accessories that the shogun, daimyo, and their families needed further required the skills of a great number of craftsmen by appointment to the shogunate or to daimyos. Edo also provided opportunities for the craftsmen who supplied swords, sword fittings, and armor for the shogun and daimyo. Others exercised their skills in making the furnishings and equipment needed for ceremonies and for everyday life.

This part of the exhibition presents materials that introduce the achievements of the craftsmen who built and maintained the great city of Edo. It also introduces a cornucopia of magnificent works by craftsmen who served the shogunate.

Section Three: Edo's Lacquer Artists —Yōyūsai and Zeshin

Maki-e, the art of creating motifs in sprinkled gold or silver on lacquer, rose to new creative heights in Edo. This part introduces two leading *maki-e* craftsmen, Hara Yōyūsai and Shibata Zeshin.

Hara Yōyūsai was renowned for his involvement with the leading men of culture of his day. His collaboration with Sakai Hitsu, the founder of the Edo Rimpa school, is particularly famed. His work is noteworthy for its context, lacquerware born among cultural exchanges in Edo, as well as its beauty.

Shibata Zeshin developed a host of variant lacquer techniques, even incorporating ideas that could be called "trick art." A superb painter as well, he developed the *urushi-e*, in which he used lacquer as through it were oils in painting pictures on paper. Zeshin's work shows us the elegance and sophisticated stylishness of the Edo people and a playfulness that takes heartfelt delight in creativity.

Section Four: The Remarkable Potter Miura Kenya and Sumidagawa Ware

The Sumida River area is famed as a place for relaxation and entertainment for the people of Edo. Less well known is that it was also a major ceramic production center. Its products included

Imado-yaki, ceramics from Imado, on the outskirts of Asakusa, such as the famous Imado clay dolls greatly loved by Edo residents. The Sumida area ceramics also gained high repute through their associations with literati tastes. For example, Miura Kenya, one of those Edo potters, carried on the ceramic techniques of Ogata Kenzan. His unique career also included studying Western shipbuilding and successfully building a battleship.

This part of the exhibition examines Sumidagawa ware, the ceramics that flourished in the Sumida River basin, and the contributions made by its potters, to introduce the little-known Edo-Tokyo ceramics industry.

Section Five: Fukawa Kazunori — A Beloved Student of Hokusai's Who Later Changed Paths to Become a Metalworker

Fukawa Kazunori was an Edo metalsmith. A pupil of Katsushika Hokusai, late in Hokusai's life, he initially began working as an artist. After Hokusai's death, however, he shifted to metalworking. Becoming a metalworker by appointment to the shogunate, he carved the models from which Bunkyo Eiho coins were cast. As internal conflicts increased and the Meiji Restoration neared, Kazunori was also ordered to make the fittings for a sword for Prince Arisugawanomiya Taruhito, a member of the imperial family.

After Kazunori's death, his two sons continued his work as Kazunori II and III, receiving orders from the imperial household and other clients. Kazunori's apprentices also carried on his skills and were active in the metalworking world.

Here, through the work of Fukawa Kazunori, we present a craftsman who, while responding flexibly to radically change times, held fast to traditional techniques.

Section Six: Edo Skills Remained Alive During the Taishō/Shōwa Periods (1912–1989)—The Miniature Craft of Kobayashi Rekisai

This part of this exhibition introduces the work of Kobayashi Rekisai, who inherited and perpetuated the skills and soul of Edo craftsmen.

Rekisai was born in Asakusa, the son of a third-generation craftsman. While creating decorative bags for *kiseru* pipes and other works, he became interested in creating miniatures. His works, with their exquisite workmanship, go far beyond simple toys or playthings. He himself named these miniature sculptures "delicate art." Rekisai, as a humble urban craftsman with no status or prestige in the art world, continued tirelessly to explore his art until the end of his life. He may have been the last craftsman to remember the heritage of Edo and carry on its traditions.

(Ochiai Noriko, Curator)



Imado Doll: Okame [a plain woman] Holding a Cat
Kanazawa Harukichi, 20th century.



Good Luck Charm Worn Suspended from the Obi Sash
Kobayashi Rekisai, 20th century.

Information

Open: 9:30-17:30 (Saturdays until 19:30) *Last entry 30 minutes before closing

Closed: Mondays (except for February 24) and Tuesday, February 25

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| Admission Fee | Special exhibition only | Special and permanent exhibition | Advance tickets for special exhibition only |
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| Standard adult | ¥1,100 (¥880) | ¥1,360 (¥1,090) | ¥900 |
| University/college students | ¥880 (¥700) | ¥1,090 (870) | ¥680 |
| Middle and high school students, Seniors 65+ | ¥550 (¥440) | ¥680 (¥550) | ¥350 |
| Tokyo middle and elementary school students | ¥550 (¥440) | None | ¥350 |

Notes

1. Fees in parentheses are for groups of twenty or more.

2. Fees are waived in the following cases: Children below school age; individuals with a Shintai Shogaisha Techo (Certificate of the Physically Disabled), Ai-no-Techo (Certificate of the Intellectually Disabled), Ryoiku Techo (Certificate of Rehabilitation), Seishin Shogaisha Hoken Fukushi Techo (Certificate of the Mentally Disabled), or Hibakusha Kenko Techo (Atomic Bomb Survivor's Certificate) and up to two people accompanying each.

3. Silver Parties (February 19, March 18): Free admission to special exhibitions for those 65 and older. Proof of age required.

4. Advance tickets will be on sale between Tuesday, November 19 and Friday, February 7. Tickets purchased on or after Saturday, February 8 are at the regular price.

Ticket Sales

Edo-Tokyo Museum or major ticket agencies (fees may apply). (For tickets to both special and permanent exhibitions, Edo-Tokyo Museum only.)

