

Seitei, Zeshin and Kyosai: Japanese Art at the Paris and Philadelphia Expositions Begins!



Dates: April 24 (Sat) to May 5 (Wed), 2021
Venue: Kashima Arts (3-3-2 Kyobashi, Chuo-ku, Tokyo)
Open all days / Free Admittance



Kashima Arts proudly presents, *Seitei, Zeshin and Kyosai: Japanese Art at the Paris and Philadelphia Expositions*. Opening April 24 (Sat), the exhibition focuses on three leading Meiji period Nihon-ga painters who have gained much attention in recent years; Watanabe Seitei, Kawanabe Kyosai and Shibata Zeshin. The exhibition will continue on view through May 5 (Wed), offering roughly 40 works and free admittance.

► On the Exhibition

With the turn of the 19th century came the rise of Euro-American globalization. During this unprecedented period of industrial and cultural prosperity, Centennial Exhibitions became a popular vehicle for countries to showcase their art and tradition. Furthermore, as diverse forms of expression began to be shared across cultures, art flourished and arose with entirely new innovations. Despite the excess, three major Japanese artists took center stage: Watanabe Seitei, Shibata Zeshin and Kawanabe Kyosai. With their originality, elegance and detail, their works caught the attention of the world and transcended the greatest of cultural boundaries.

Despite their overwhelming success in the West and the subsequent impact of Japonisme, the exclusion of these artists from mainstream modern Japanese art history allowed for them to be overshadowed for a long time. Thankfully, in recent years, their works have gone re-evaluation and have rightfully regained mass recognition. We welcome you all to take this rare opportunity to collectively witness the works of three esteemed artists, who continue to stun audiences across many generations and cultures.



Watanabe Seitei, *Wisteria and Old Willow Tree*

► Exhibiting Artists



Shibata Zeshin, *An Album of Illustrations* (from an album of 12)

● Shibata Zeshin (1807-1891)

Shibata Zeshin was a Bakumatsu to Meiji period Japanese Shijo school painter and lacquer artist who was born in Edo (modern Tokyo). Amongst his many talents, he is best known for his excellence in Urushi-e (lacquer painting). A vanguard in his field, Zeshin introduced new techniques and has notably impacted the Meiji period lacquer industry. Furthermore, Zeshin's paintings, as well as his highly viscous Western-style textured lacquerware are highly sought after in the West.

- Exhibitor at the 1873 Vienna World's Fair, awarded for Outstanding Development.
- Exhibitor at the 1876 Philadelphia Expo, awarded.
- Exhibitor at the 1889 Paris Expo, gold medal award recipient.

● Kawanabe Kyosai (1831-1889)

Kyosai grew up in Edo. He studied Kano school painting and, following graduation, gained popularity through the caricatures and nishiki-e (colored woodblock prints) he began creating towards the end of the Edo period. In the west, he is best known for his uki-e and caricatures. His works often center upon ideas of "rebellion" and "satire". Sharp and armed with extraordinary artistic talent, the impact of Kyosai's satirical works has proved to increase over the increment of time. Amongst his pupils was Josiah Conder, an architect best known for his many designs of modern Japanese landmarks, i.e. Rokumeikan.



Kawanabe Kyosai, *Frog Sumo*

- Paints "Empress Jingu, Takenouchi no Sukune", a large banner that adorned the Japanese garden at the 1873 Vienna World's Fair.
- Exhibitor at the 1876 Philadelphia Expo.

● Watanabe Seitei (1852-1918)

Through Shibata Zeshin's introduction, Watanabe Seitei became a disciple of the great history painter, Kikuchi Yosai. In 1878, Seitei traveled to France to attend the Paris Expo whereby he happened to meet the Impressionists. While also known for gifting Edgar Degas a painting he made, Seitei is remember as the first Japanese painter to ever visit Paris.

Ahead of their time, Seitei's works fuses the sophisticated Edo aesthetic of Yosai and Zeshin with the western styles he encountered in France. A refined blend of diverse aesthetics, Seitei's works are well received by contemporary audiences and has earned its own following.

- Exhibitor at the 1878 Vienna World's Fair, bronze medal award recipient.
- Exhibitor at the 1883 International Colonial and Export Exhibition (Amsterdam), bronze medal award recipient.
- Exhibitor at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair.

► Exhibition Highlights

1 An Opportunity to See & Attain Works by the Most Watched Figures in Japanese Art

Watanabe Seitei, the master painter who excelled in delicate brushwork, a sophisticated sense composition and an advanced comprehension of realism and color. Kawanabe Kyosai, the painter who, when many Edo painters were forced to close their businesses, maintained his rebellious vigour during the Meiji period with unequivocal artistry and light humor. Shibata Zeshin, the lacquer artist and pioneer, known for his refined and original aesthetics and urushi-e innovations. The exhibition offers roughly 40 works by the three most coveted Japanese artists. Universally beloved, these works have captivated a vast array of viewers, from Japanese art lovers, to their contemporary international spectators, the universality of these works have maintained their current demand.

2 View Art in the Safety of Your Home

With the COVID-19 outbreak, the implementation of new measures has been necessary to ensure the wellbeing of everyone. In order to allow for the enjoyment of art while also ensuring the safety of all, Kashima Arts will offer free in-house digital catalogs of all exhibited works. Digital catalogs can be accessed on smartphones and computer devices, so works can be viewed anywhere, like in the pleasure and safety of their home. Works are allotted to customers on a first come first serve basis, so be sure to contact our team if there are any works that interest you.

For first time customers, please email Kashima Arts (intl@kashima-arts.co.jp) to register for this offer.

3 View Art Without the Distraction of Glass Casing

All works will be exhibited at the gallery without glass casing. An opportunity to view the subtle textures and details of each work, the exhibition offers visitors to experience art at its fullest.



► **Highlighted Works**



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① Watanabe Seitei, *Fujin Raijin (Wind God and Thunder God)* ② Kawanabe Kyosai, *Yang Guifei (Yokichi)* ③ Kawanabe Kyosai, *Seven Gods of Good Fortune* ④ Shibata Zeshin, *An Album of Illustrations* (from an album of 12)

► **Event Details**

Seitei, Zeshin and Kyosai: Japanese Art at the Paris and Philadelphia Expositions

Website ► https://www.kashima-arts.co.jp/en/exhibitions/seitei_kyosai_zeshin/

Dates ► April 24 (Sat) to May 5 (Wed), 2021. Open everyday, from 10am to 6 pm.

Exhibiting Artists ► Watanabe Seitei, Kawanabe Kyosai and Shibata Zeshin

Venue ► Kashima Arts (3-3-2, Kyobashi, Chuo-ku, Tokyo, Japan 104-0031)

Email: intl@kashima-arts.co.jp / TEL : +81 (0)3-3276-0700

Access: 2 min walk from Exit 3 of Kyobashi Station, Tokyo Metro Ginza Line

3 mins walk from Exit 7 of Ginza Itchome Station, Tokyo Metro Yurakucho Line

5 mins walk from Exit A4 of Takaracho Station, Toei Subway Asakusa Line

9 mins walk from Yaesu Minami-guchi (Yaesu south exit) of JR Tokyo Station

Admittance ► Free Exhibited Works ► Approx. 40

※ Depending on the state of COVID-19, business days and hours are subject to change. Please check updates on the Kashima Arts website (<https://www.kashima-arts.co.jp/en/>), Facebook (@kashima.arts), Instagram or Twitter (both @kashima_arts).

Press & Media Inquiries

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