

Online International Symposium  
Exhibiting 'Japan' Overseas: Overseas Contexts and Japan's Contexts

Abstracts

◆ Japanese Art in the West and Its Exhibitions

Hans Bjarne Thomsen(University of Zurich)

Collecting Japanese art has a long history in the west, spanning centuries of contacts via the Dutch VOC and other routes of transfer. The study of these works of art has also enjoyed a long history, driven partly by Japanese and partly by western scholars, dealers, and collectors. The results of these studies have resulted not only in publications, but in a series of landmark exhibitions. During the last years, the field has been significant changes in the ways that Japanese art works in the West have been studied and exhibited, reflecting a change in the concept and image of “:Japan.”

◆ “Japan”, which the First Japanese Mission to the U.S.A. of 1860 wished to display

FUKUOKA Mariko(National Museum of Japanese History)

In 1860, two years after the signing of the American-Japanese treaty of friendship and commerce, the Japanese shogunate government dispatched a mission to the U.S.A. with the aim to exchange the ratification instruments with the US government according to the treaty. They brought with them the shogun's letter and a series of presents to the US President. This paper will firstly show what kind of letter and presents they were, and then look into the preparing process of them prior to the departure of the mission. What kind of “Japan” they were going to display, as the first practice of diplomacy after the de facto seclusion of more than 200 years? Was their choice a total invention of their generation or re-interpretation of some precedents? These questions will be examined in this paper.

◆ Experiments in Remote Surveys

University of Zurich's East Asian Art History Department,  
ETH Graphische Sammlung

How can we conduct archival surveys in the digital age? The University of Zurich was forced to conduct an online survey of Japanese and Chinese prints and drawings in the ETH Graphische Sammlung after the lockdown, when both the museum and research libraries closed their doors. This is case study presentation, given by students and professionals of the university into how archival surveys can be carried about, despite a lack of direct access to the works of art.