

October 9, 2020

Artizon Museum, Ishibashi Foundation

## Selections from the Ishibashi Foundation Collection Special Section: Aoki Shigeru, Sakamoto Hanjiro, Koga Harue, and Their Age: Artists from Kurume

November 3(Tuesday), 2020-January 24(Sunday), 2021



SAKAMOTO Hanjiro, *Three Grazing Horses*, 1932 Oil on canvas

Artizon Museum, Ishibashi Foundation (Director: Ishibashi Hiroshi) is delighted to announce its upcoming special section, "*Aoki Shigeru, Sakamoto Hanjiro, Koga Harue, and Their Age: Artists from Kurume.*" in the Collection Exhibition.

At the Artizon Museum, the fourth-floor gallery presents Selections from the Collection, in which selected works from the more than 2,800 works in the Ishibashi Foundation Collection are displayed. The Special Section area there will present a special exhibition, each planned with a different theme, that will shed new light on works in the collection.

The heart of the Ishibashi Foundation's collection of modern Western-style Japanese paintings consists of works by Aoki Shigeru and Sakamoto Hanjiro. Like Ishibashi Shojiro, the founder of the Bridgestone Museum of Art, the Artizon's predecessor, they were from the city of Kurume, in Fukuoka prefecture, and were the artists who inspired Shojiro to begin collecting seriously. Kurume and the neighboring Chikugo region produced many artists in the late Meiji through the Taisho and early Showa periods (1890-1940); the context was the presence there in the Meiji period of an instructor in Western-style art and the central roles that Aoki and Sakamoto, who both trained under that teacher, played in Kurume's art circles. The many other artists who, fascinated by Aoki's and Sakamoto's towering presence, went to Tokyo, have also left their mark on the history of Western-style painting in Japan. Among them, Matsuda Teisho, who was four years younger than Aoki and Sakamoto, watched over younger artists and connected them to more senior figures in the art world. This exhibition focuses on the creative works and local connections that Matsuda makes clear in introducing the highly productive Western-style painting school associated with Kurume, through the works of Aoki, Sakamoto, and Koga, as well as Matsuda, Takashima Yajuro, and Takata Rikizo.

Artizon museum has recently acquired twenty-five sketches by Aoki, from his student days. They are his depictions of the many masks he saw on exhibit when making regular museum visits, from about 1900. These mask sketches are of great import for considering the context in which Aoki created his *Paradise under the Sea* and other paintings based on myths. Most have not, however, been exhibited since 1980; they have come to be known as the "secret sketches." This exhibition includes three of those newly acquired works by Aoki. We are also able to welcome at last one of Sakamoto's oil paintings of the moon, which had not been in the collection. Sakamoto is known for his many treatments of that subject; this exhibition is the first public display of his *Dim Light*, a painting of the moon from the last year of his life and, in fact, his last work.

## Highlights



①  
AOKI Shigeru  
*A Gift of the Sea*  
1904  
Oil on canvas  
Important Cultural Property

Aoki Shigeru is the leading artist of the age of Romanticism. During his brief life, which ended at twenty-eight, he was always at the leading edge of his times.

In mid July, 1904, he set out on a sketching trip with his friends, the artists Sakamoto Hanjiro, Morita Tsunetomo, and Fukuda Tane, to Mera, at Tateyama, Chiba Prefecture. *A Gift of the Sea* is his masterwork from that month and a half in the fishing village, which faces the Pacific's Kuroshio Current. Sakamoto later wrote that he had encountered a spectacular scene of fishermen returning with a big catch. After he went back and told Aoki about it, Aoki started working on *A Gift of the Sea* the next day. Sakamoto also wrote that the painting was utterly unlike the actual scene. Aoki's transformation of the scene after hearing the eyewitness description reveals his imaginative brilliance and creativity.

The painting shows ten naked men carrying three sharks on their backs, moving along the beach in two lines. The figures in the middle of the group are bathed in strong light shining directly from the front.

Aoki had absorbed the landforms and the customs of Mera and recreated them, in wild brushwork, in a theme filled with youthful energy. Since Aoki himself said nothing about what inspired him, researchers have offered various interpretations: the Parthenon friezes, the Pre-Raphaelites, an advertisement for medicine, or Mera's shrine festival.



②  
AOKI Shigeru, *Paradise under the Sea*, 1907  
Oil on canvas  
Important Cultural Property

Aoki Shigeru, who loved books, read widely in world mythology and created several works based on Japanese myths, including this one from the *Kojiki* (Record of Ancient Matters). Yamasachi-hiko has lost a fishhook belonging to his brother, Umisachi-hiko, and descends to the bottom of the sea to find it. There he sees the palace, glowing like fish scales, of the god of the sea, Wadatsumi, and a well at its entrance. A maid comes to draw water from the well, sees Yamasachi-hiko sitting in a tree, and calls Toyotama-hime, the sea god's daughter. The woman in the red garment, exchanging glances with Yamasachi-hiko, is Toyotama-hime; the maid is in white, on the right. Toyotama-hime and Yamasachi-hiko marry, and their son becomes the founder of the imperial family.

The composition, with three figures arranged on the long, vertical picture plane, shows the influence of the Pre-Raphaelites in Britain. Aoki also said that he was influenced by Gustave Moreau's use of color. He made this painting for the Tokyo Industrial Exhibition, in the spring of 1907. He left many paintings unfinished, but this one is an exception. Natsume Soseki saw it at the exhibition and wrote, two years later, in the novel *Sorekara* (And then), "At an exhibit the other day, someone named Aoki had a painting of a tall woman standing at the bottom of the ocean. Of all the entries, Daisuke had found this one alone to be pleasingly executed."



③ AOKI Shigeru, *Sketches of Bugaku Masks*, c.1900-1903  
Pencil and wash on paper

This exhibition presents three of the twenty-five “mask sketches” by Aoki Shigeru that the museum has newly added to the collection. The work shown here is one of those sketches. They are his depictions of the great variety of masks he saw on exhibit when making regular visits to the Tokyo Imperial Museum (now the Tokyo National Museum), from about 1900. In the margins around the sketches he has noted explanations of the masks and the colors used; these notes communicate how passionately he engaged with the forms of *gigaku* (an ancient mask dance) and *bugaku* (Japanese court music accompanied by masked dancing), which reached Japan at about that time that the *Kojiki* (Record of Ancient Matters) and *Nihon Shoki* (Chronicles of Japan), Japan’s first histories, filled with myths, were compiled. Our collection includes several of his masterpieces on mythological themes, including *Onamuchi-no-mikoto* and *Paradise under the Sea*. Aoki’s friend Sakamoto Hanjiro owned the mask sketches, which his heirs discovered in his studio after Sakamoto’s death. Since most have not been exhibited since 1980, they came to be called the “secret sketches.”



④ KOGA Harue, *From the Upstairs Window*, 1922  
Oil on canvas

Koga Harue showed this work, along with *Burial* (1922, Jodoshu Head Temple Chion-in), at the ninth Nika Exhibition, receiving the Nika Prize for this his debut on the central art world stage. It depicts the view from the second floor of the inn where he stayed in Chikuzen Kanazaki (Munakata, Fukuoka prefecture), with the window frame and part of the interior of his room included. The triangular thatched roof, rectangular window frame around it, and cloudless blue sky contrast with the round fruit, teapot, and washbasin placed in the foreground to create a fresh composition. It was also shown at the joint Nikakai and Salon d'automne show in Paris the next year.



⑤  
 SAKAMOTO Hanjiro, *Three Grazing Horses*, 1932  
 Oil on canvas

Sakamoto Hanjiro, painter of many horses, cows, Noh masks, and moons, was the elementary school substitute teacher from whom Ishibashi Shojiro first learned about art, and later urged him to collect the work of Aoki Shigeru. He went to study in Paris in 1921, at age 39. Returning to Japan in 1924, he went straight to his home in Kurume, where his family awaited him. In 1931, he moved to Yame and built an atelier there in which he painted this work. The three horses face forward, to the side, and to the rear. The emerald green he used for the eyes of the horse in the center is also the base color for the horses' bodies and legs, the sky, the ground, and the trees in the background, pulling the entire picture plane together.

A friend's commission for a horse painting was the trigger for his many paintings of horses. Fascinated by their lively appearance outdoors in the rich natural beauty of Kyushu, he would go visit pastures and horse markets in search of horses that appealed to him.



⑥  
 SAKAMOTO Hanjiro, *Noh Mask and Hand Drum Body*, 1962  
 Oil on canvas

Sakamoto Hanjiro first saw Noh performed in 1913, when he was thirty-one. He then started going with the poet Miki Rofu to performances at the Noh Theater in the Peers' Club in Kudan, Tokyo. Later, when his wife, Kaoru, began taking part in the tea ceremony, he went with her when she was collecting tea utensils and purchased his first Noh mask, a *koomote* or mask representing a young woman, at an antique dealer's. Thereafter, seizing every opportunity, he acquired a variety of masks. His series of thirty some Noh mask paintings, which he began when he was sixty, is highly regarded. Just the Noh actor positions his body perfectly on the stage, he has arranged the script, mask, and drum exquisitely, in a careful composition filled with peace and tranquility.



⑦  
 SAKAMOTO Hanjiro, *Dim Light*, 1969

Sakamoto Hanjiro's themes included cows, horses, masks and other still life subject, and, in his final year, the moon. This painting is his final work as well as the last of his moon series. The moon, largely hidden by clouds, shed its faint light on the trees, which take on a variety of colors. The trees are probably wax trees, which had special meaning for Sakamoto. Sakamoto's moon one would expect to be a full moon, but here it is shrouded in clouds, as though a premonition of the ending of his own life. Sakamoto's eyesight declined late in his life, and he is said to have become nearly blind. This scene presents what was in Sakamoto mind's eye, or in his heart.

## Exhibition overview

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Exhibition title  | : Selections from the Ishibashi Foundation Collection Special Section:<br>Aoki Shigeru, Sakamoto Hanjiro, Koga Harue, and Their Age: Artists from<br>Kurume  |
| Organizer         | : Artizon Museum, Ishibashi Foundation   |
| Exhibition period | : 3 November (Tuesday), 2020 – 24 January (Sunday), 2021   |
| Opening hours     | : 10:00 – 18:00 (Evening hours, with the museum open until 20:00 on Fridays,<br>have been suspended until further notice. For the latest information, please<br>check our website.)<br>* Last admission 30 minutes before closing. |
| Closed            | : Mondays (opens on 23 November, 11 January), 13 November, 24 November,<br>Year end and New Years (December 28 to January 4), January 12   |
| Venue             | : Artizon Museum 4F Gallery<br>1-7-2 Kyobashi, Chuo-ku, Tokyo 104-0031, Japan<br>Tel. Domestic: 050-5541-8600 International: 047-316-2772 (Hello Dial)<br><a href="http://www.artizon.museum">www.artizon.museum</a>               |
| Curator           | : Ito Eriko  |

Admission (tax included):

◆ 3 November (Tuesday) – 12 November (Thursday), 2020

Online reservation available beginning September 3 (Thursday)

During this period, only the 4F Gallery will be open; the 5F and 6F Galleries will be closed. Visitors may view Selections from the Ishibashi Foundation Collection, which includes this exhibition, in the 4F Gallery.

Online ticket: 500 Yen

Same-day ticket (on sale at museum): 500 Yen

Student free entry (Advance online booking required.)

\* The admission fee applies only to Selections from the Ishibashi Foundation Collection, which includes this exhibition.

◆ 14 November (Saturday), 2020 – 24 January (Sunday), 2021

Online reservation available beginning September 14 (Monday)

During this period the *Rimpa and Impressionism: Arts Produced by Urban Cultures, East and West* exhibition will be held concurrently.

Online ticket: 1,700 Yen

Same-day ticket (on sale at museum): 2,000 Yen

Student free entry (Advance online booking required.)

\*This admission fee includes admission to all concurrent exhibitons.

\*Same-day tickets at ticket counter only available in case online reservation tickets have not been sold out.

\*No reservation required for middle-school students and younger.

\*Please bring your smartphone and earphones. The Artizon Museum app enables you to enjoy a guide to the exhibition, free of charge, by voice actor Hosoya Yoshimasa.

## Concurrent Exhibition

Rimpa and Impressionism: Arts Produced by Urban Cultures, East and West

November 14 (Saturday), 2020 – January 24 (Sunday), 2021

Venue: 6,5F Galleries

## Images for Press use

Apply for images from this exhibition for press use by clicking on the link below, from our press release and PR data download system:

<https://faith-pr.com/artizon/kurume2020>



\* If including only one image, use the main visual ⑤ shown on page4.

\* Include image credits as provided.

\* Do not trim images or overlay them with text.

### **For inquiries about this press release:**

Artizon Museum Kurume2020 Exhibition PR Office (within OHANA, Inc.)

Contacts: Takahashi, Hosokawa, Senō

Tel: 03-6869-7881 Fax: 03-6869-7801

E-mail: [artizon-pr@ohanapr.co.jp](mailto:artizon-pr@ohanapr.co.jp)

Risona Kudan Bldg, 5F, 1-5-6 Kudan Minami, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102-0074, Japan

### **For inquiries about the Artizon Museum, Ishibashi Foundation:**

Artizon Museum Public Relations Group

E-mail: [publicity@artizon.jp](mailto:publicity@artizon.jp)

1-7-2 Kyobashi, Chuo-ku, Tokyo 104-0031, Japan

## Entry to the Artizon Museum uses the designated entry system by date and time.

Tickets must be purchased in advance from the museum website.

Ticket price (incl. tax)

### ◆ 3 November (Tuesday) – 12 November (Thursday), 2020

Online reservation available beginning September 3 (Thursday)

During this period, only the 4F Gallery will be open; the 5F and 6F Galleries will be closed.

|                 | General | University, college, high school students | Those presenting disabled persons' handbook | Children through junior high school      |
|-----------------|---------|---|---|--|
| Online ticket   | JPY 500 | Free entry—Advanced booking required      |   | Free entry—Advanced booking not required |
| Same day ticket | JPY 500 |   |   |  |

### ◆ 14 November (Saturday), 2020 – 24 January (Sunday), 2021

Online reservation available beginning September 14 (Monday)

During this period the *Rimpa and Impressionism: Arts Produced by Urban Cultures, East and West* exhibition will be held concurrently.

|                 | General   | University, college, high school students | Those presenting disabled persons' handbook | Children through junior high school      |
|-----------------|-----------|---|---|--|
| Online ticket   | JPY 1,700 | Free entry—Advanced booking required      |   | Free entry—Advanced booking not required |
| Same day ticket | JPY 2,000 |   |   |  |

\*Online tickets must be purchased up to 10 minutes before the end of each time slot.

\*Same day tickets on sale at museum are available only for time slots that have not reached full capacity.

## Designated entry system by date and time

The designated entry system by date and time is designed so that visitors may enjoy a more comfortable viewing experience. Please purchase your tickets for an entry time slot for the day you will visit, as shown below, and make sure you enter the museum within that time slot.

① 10:00–11:30 ②12:00–13:30 ③14:00–15:30 ④16:00–17:30

You may enter at any time within the designated time slot.

- Once you enter the museum, your ticket is valid for the rest of the day; you may stay and enjoy the exhibition until the museum closes.
- At the start of each entry time slot, the museum may be crowded. You may be asked to wait before entering the museum. We recommend arriving for entry slightly after the start of your time slot.

### **Online designated entry time ticket purchase**

- Tickets must be purchased from the museum website ([www.artizon.museum](http://www.artizon.museum)) by clicking on the Ticketing link and selecting the date and time slot when you wish to enter.
- Tickets must be purchased up to 10 minutes before the end of each time slot.
- Major credit cards are accepted for payment.

### **Delivery of online designated entry time ticket and entry to the museum**

After you have purchased your ticket, an E-mail will be sent to your designated E-mail address.

Please access the QR code and download it onto your smartphone. You can also print out the QR code and bring the paper with the print out with you when you visit the museum.

### **Same day ticket sales**

Tickets are available only for time slots that have not reached full capacity; they can be purchased on 1F of the museum.

### **Advanced booking**

- Entry is free for university and college students and high school students, but advanced booking of the entry time slot is required. Each student must present a student ID upon entrance to the museum.
- Children through junior high school age are admitted for free. No advanced booking is required.
- Entry is free for disabled visitors (plus one accompanying assistant), but advanced booking of the entry time slot is required. Disabled visitors must present their disabled persons handbook upon entrance to the museum.

### **Important information**

- Once your ticket purchase is confirmed, cancellation of the ticket is not allowed.
  - Change of the time and date is available only once.
  - There are no discounts for group tickets or for senior citizens.
  - Entry is only allowed for the designated time slot.
  - Resale of tickets for commercial purposes is not allowed.
-