

Refined Sumi Ink Lines Amplified by Pure White Coloring

Tsuchida Bakusen, *Korean Bench*, 1933

Korean bench, is a bed-like furniture where a person can sit or lay down. On the bench, there is a woman sitting with one of her legs stretched out and another woman at the side standing modestly. The two women are depicted with their gaze towards the viewer in a Korean folk dress, with white being a preferred color of ordinary people. The women are placed largely inside the picture with a simple composition of white background and uniformly fine lines. The soft colors convey a pure and noble atmosphere. The sincere look of the artist towards the modest and neatly dressed women can be observed from this work.

Korean Bench was produced in 1933 by Tsuchida Bakusen (1887-1936), when he was 46 years old. Bakusen passes away three years after with the age of 49, consequently defining this work as one of his later representative works. From an early age, Bakusen's strong field was painting human figures, especially women and was famous for his beautiful flow of lines. This work can be perceived as the acme of such style; however, compared to Bakusen's other female themed works such as *Serving Girl in a Spa* (The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo) of 1918 and “*Maiko in a Garden*” of 1924 which are characteristically vivid in coloring, this work is fairly limited in coloring, having white as its base color.

Let’s take a look at what kind of work Bakusen aimed for as his compilation of female figures in his later years.

During the year of Korean Bench's production, Bakusen went to Korea and stayed in Gyeongseong

(present Seoul) for three months. At that time, Korea was ruled as a part of the Empire of Japan, having many Japanese painters travel there for subject of painting. There, Bakusen studied manners and customs from antiques. He sketched giaseng, or Korean geisha and completed *Korean Bench* based on the sketch and exhibited at the 12th Korea Art Exhibition and the 14th Teiten. It is said that the work was almost overlooked inside the Teiten venue because of its inconspicuous nature of the whole screen being white colored.

As painter Kaburaki Kiyokata described this work as “tranquil beauty,” the picture is organized throughout every corner, excessively omitting wasteful elements. The white coloring in particular, take notice.

Bakusen is known for adopting vivid colors of Western paintings into Japanese-style painings during his first half of his painting career; however, in his latter half, he was greatly influenced by paintings such as the classical Chinese bird-and-flower paintings and took deep interest in the usage of white *gofun* (pigment made from ground clamshell), which indicates purity. When Bakusen saw the beautiful whiteness of the traditional clothing in Korea, he must have felt it as a suitable subject in expressing immaculate beauty. It must be, that by this color, the refined *sumi* ink lines will be amplified. This was the artist's aim.

Novelist Nakagawa Yoichi praised this work as “persistently silent and persistently beautiful masterpiece.”

(The Museum Curator - Mori Mitsuhiro)



Collection Room Winter

Special Display: East Asia and Arts of Modern Kyoto

Dec. 4 (Sun), 2022 – Mar. 5 (Sun), 2023 Main Building (South Wing) 1F

List of Works ※ … Private Collection

No.	Inv.No.	Artist	Birth and Death	Title	Date	Material; Shape	Size (cm)	First exhibition
East Asia and Arts of Modern Kyoto								
1	N-048	TSUCHIDA, Bakusen	明1887-1936	Korean Bench	1933	Pigment on silk; framed	153.0 × 209.0	14th Teiten
2	N-034	MAEDA, Seison	1885-1977	Looking at Pictures	1936	Pigment on silk; framed	179.0 × 222.0	1st Kaiso Teiten
3	N-063	NISHIYAMA, Suisho	1879-1958	Horse	1939	Pigment on silk; framed	166.0 × 188.0	3rd Shin Bunten
4	※	KUBOTA, Beisen	1852-1906	Han River in Spring, Chungsuk Gateway in Autumn	1895	Sumi ink and pigment on paper; a pair of six-fold screens	155.0 × 363.0 each	
5	N-239	TSUJI, Kako	1870-1931	Morning in Dongnae Village, Evening at Mannyundae in Busan	1920	Pigment on paper; a pair of hanging scrolls	168.1 × 90.5 each	2nd Teiten
6	N-061	OMURA, Taiun	1883-1938	Liang Kai, Chinese Painter	1928	Pigment on silk; hanging scroll	229.0 × 114.5	9th Teiten
7	N-359	MURAKAMI, Kagaku	1888-1939	Amitabha, the Buddha of Infinite Light	1916	Pigment on silk; hanging scroll with box, authenticated by IRIE, Hako	209.2 × 130.8	10th Bunten (Special Award)
8	N-839	MORI, Shumei	1892-1951	Pounding Wheat	1934	Pigment on paper; two-fold screen	169.0 × 170.0	15th Teiten
9	N-113	KIKUCHI, Keigetsu	1879-1955	The Isle of Paipateroma, a Utopia of Okinawan Legend	1928	Pigment on silk; framed	224.0 × 176.0	9th Teiten
10	N-607	KAJIWARA, Hisako	1896-1988	Weaving	1933	Pigment on silk; two-fold screen	158.5 × 200.0	14th Teiten
11	N-870	FUJIKI, Ako	1896-1943	A Summer Day	1939	Pigment on silk; framed	208.0 × 184.0	3rd Shin Bunten
12	N-562	AKINO, Fuku	1908-2001	Prayers at the Courtyard	1984	Pigment on paper; framed	129.4 × 134.5	Juried Exhibition, held by the Kyoto City Association of Culture and Art in Kyoto City
13	N-301	ISODA, Mataichiro	1907-1998	By the River	1972	Pigment on paper; framed	212.0 × 148.5	4th Kaiso Nitten
14	N-210	MIKAMI, Makoto	1919-1972	Moxibustion Kaleidoscope	1966	Pigment on paper; framed	151.5 × 92.0	24th Panreal Group Exhibition
15	Y-001	OKADA, Saburosuke	1869-1939	Memories of Manchuria	1933	Oil on wooden board; framed	63.0 × 66.5	Inaugural Exhibition
16	Y-004	HATTORI, Kizo	1893-1978	Old Pottery	1934	Oil on canvas; framed	84.0 × 115.0	Inaugural Exhibition
17	Y-180	OTA, Kijiro	1883-1951	On the Indian Ocean	1913	Oil on canvas; framed	37.0 × 44.5	Produced in Europe
18	N-1203	OGAWA, Suison	1902-1964	Beautiful Female Performers Singing	1922	Pigment on silk; screen in triptych form	201.5 × 268.1	4th Teiten
19	N-1010	SHIKOU, Sorin	1781-1850	Street Vendor Selling Birds	Date Unknown	Pigment on silk; hanging scroll	137.0 × 97.9	

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20	N-106	HASHIMOTO, Kansetsu	1883-1945	Preparatory drawing for Dugout	1942	Sumi ink and pigment on paper; hanging scroll	242.0 × 114.0	Drawing for a piece submitted to the 5th Shin Bunten
21	S-087	NAGAO, Uzan	1864-1942	Cui Zi-Yu's Motto	Date Unknown	Sumi ink on paper; hanging scroll	150.0 × 40.0	
22	S-077	NAITO, Konan	1866-1934	A Poem of Li Bai, "Old-Fashioned"	1923	Sumi Ink on fan paper; hanging scroll	25.0 × 54.0	
23	S-078	NAITO, Konan	1866-1934	Seven-Character Quatrain	Date Unknown	Sumi ink on paper; hanging scroll	140.0 × 34.5	
24	S-079	NAITO, Konan	1866-1934	A Chinese Poem of Inner Peace	Date Unknown	Sumi Ink on paper; framed	37.7 × 142.9	
25	S-067	KANO, Kunzan	1868-1947	A Poem by Zhou Mei Cheng	1935	Sumi ink on paper; hanging scroll	67.0 × 28.0	
26	S-033	NAKANO, Etsunan	1883-1980	Chinese Poetry of Clouds	c. 1958	Sumi ink on paper; two-fold screen	136.0 × 122.0	
27	S-092	NAKANO, Etsunan	1883-1980	Summer and Autumn Poems From the Japanese Waka Compilation, Gosenshū	1936	Sumi ink on paper; booklet	21.0×16.5	
28	S-029	NAKANO, Etsunan	1883-1980	Excerpt from "Spring Poems" in Man'yōshu	1950	Sumi ink on paper; scroll	27.5 × 275.0	
29	S-003	HIBINO, Goho	1901-1985	Bush Warbler	1965	Sumi ink on paper; framed	34.0 × 108.0	8th Shin Nitten
30	S-016	TOMIOKA, Tessai	1836-1924	"Kogyoso," a Phrase From a Chinese Poem	c. 1896	Sumi ink on paper; hanging scroll	30.0 × 70.7	

The Beauty of Porcelain: Focusing on White Porcelain								
31	K-780	TAKENAKA, Ko	1941-	White Porcelain Bowl	1977	Porcelain	H 9.7 cm, Opening Diam. 31.5 cm, Bottom Diam. 13.5	"Exhibition of Ohara-Style Flower Artist Toyotake Abe's Flower Arrangements with Three Ceramic Artists" (Mitsukoshi, Kitahama, Osaka, 1977)
32	K-825	TAKENAKA, Ko	1941-	Brush Stand, White Porcelain	c.1980	Porcelain	H 12.0, Opening Diam. 11.2, Bottom Diam. 10.5	
33	K-930	TAKENAKA, Hiroshi	1941-	Incense Container in White Porcelain	c.1975-79	Porcelain	3.9 × 5.0 × 2.8	
34	K-824	TAKENAKA, Ko	1941-	Jar with Faceted Sides, White Porcelain	c.1977	Porcelain	H 19.0, Body Diam. 21.0, Opening Diam. 4.5, Bottom Diam. 11.5	
35	K-116	KIYOMIZU, Rokube V	1875-1959	Flat Vessel with Heavenly Maiden, White Porcelain	Date Unknown	Porcelain	H 33.0, Body Diam. 26.0, Opening Diam. 10.0	
36	K-029	KUSUBE, Yaichi	1897-1984	Water Jar, Blue-and-White Porcelain	1941	Porcelain	15.5 × 23.0 × 21.5	4th Shin Bunten
37	K-449	KUSUBE, Yaichi	1897-1984	White Celadon Porcelain Vase with Faceted Design	Date Unknown	Porcelain	H 20.8 cm, Body Diam. 11.5	
38	K-337	ITO, Kei	1924-2017	Flower	1998	Porcelain	H 33.5, Body Diam. 27.5, Opening Diam. 14.5	50th Kyoten
39	K-335	ITO, Kei	1924-2017	White Porcelain "Elegance"	1995	Porcelain	H 34.0, Body Diam. 26.5, Opening Diam. 13.7	47th Kyoten
40	K-336	ITO, Kei	1924-2017	White Porcelain "Blossom"	1997	Porcelain	H 27.5, Body Diam. 45.3, Opening Diam. 45.3	49th Kyoten
41	K-958	TAKENAKA, Ko	1941-	Jar with "Sword-Blade" Ridges, White Porcelain	2011	Porcelain	H34.5, Body Diam. 41.0	
Winter Landscape								
42	N-1206	KOMATSU, Hitoshi	1902-1989	Snow on Cedar Trees	1940	Pigment on paper; a pair of six-fold screens	172.5 × 370.4 cm each	1st Sannankai Exhibition

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43	N-127	UDA, Tekison	1896-1980	Kiyomizu-dera Temple, Kyoto	1957	Pigment on paper; framed	90.0 × 120.0 cm	13th Nitten
44	※	UEMURA, Shoen	1875-1949	Sei Shōnagon	c.1917-18	Pigment on silk; framed	158.4 × 70.6cm	
45	N-241	KAWAI, Kenji	1908-1996	Dawn	1974	Pigment on paper; framed	163.5 × 221.0 cm	6th Kaiso Nitten
46	N-037	KAWAMURA, Manshu	1880-1942	Hoarfrost	1936	Pigment on silk; framed	124.0 × 147.0 cm	Bunten Shotaiten, 1936
47	N-1147	NISHIHISAMATSU, Yoshio	1952-	Winter Journey	1987	Pigment on hemp paper; framed	181.8 × 227.3 cm	39th Kyoten (awarded Mayor's Prize)
48	N-310	MIWA, Chosei	1901-1983	Hillside Houses	1955	Pigment on paper; framed	182.0 × 137.0 cm	11th Nitten
49	N-1183	YAMAMOTO, Tomokatsu	1927-2003	Row of Houses	1987	Natural mineral pigment, dried mud pigment, pigment and Sumi ink on Japanese paper; framed	162.2 × 212.0 cm	19th Nitten
50	N-598	NISHIYAMA, Hideo	1911-1989	The Forbidden City, Beijing	1988	Pigment on paper; framed	93.0 × 235.5 cm	
51	N-216	MIKAMI, Makoto	1919-1972	Town of the Opposite Sex, A	1962	Pigment on paper; framed	122.0 × 153.0 cm	20th Panreal Group Exhibition
52	N-132	SHIMOMURA, Ryonosuke	1923-1998	Edge of the Pond	1957	Pigment on paper; framed	154.5 × 114.5 cm	15th Panreal Group Exhibition
53	N-933	IWASAWA, Shigeo	1927-2009	Frozen Rhythm	1997	Pigment on paper; framed	225.0 × 150.0 cm	29th Kaiso Nitten
54	N-303	NAKAJI, Yujin	1933-2017	Winter Field	1975	Pigment on paper; framed	228.5 × 168.0 cm	7th Kaiso Nitten
55	N-208	TOKUOKA, Shinsen	1896-1972	Stream	1954	Pigment on paper; framed	132.0 × 170.0 cm	10th Nitten
56	N-295	ONO, Chikkyo	1889-1979	Evening Clouds	1965	Pigment on paper; framed	98.0 × 143.0 cm	8th Shin Nitten

The Avant-garde Movement in the Kansai Region After WWII								
57	N-616	YAMAZAKI, Takashi	1916-2004	Seashore	1949	Pigment on paper; framed	169.0 × 203.0 cm	2nd Panreal Group Exhibition
58	N-789	SHIMOMURA, Ryonosuke	1923-1998	Fly Through the Moonlight (YA)	1988	Pigment on paper; framed	122.7 × 244.0 cm	46th Panreal Group Exhibition
59	K-039	YAGI, Kazuo	1918-1979	Corona	1948	Earthenware with inlaid design	H 48.5 cm, Body Diam. 17.0 cm, Opening Diam. 5.5 cm	4th Kyoten (awarded Kyoten Prize)
60	K-322	TERAO, Koji	1929-1987	Work 63-A	1963	Earthenware and wood	71.8 × 61.2 × 11.6 cm	Solo exhibition (Galerie 16, Kyoto, 1963)
61	K-267	YANAGIHARA, Mutsuo	1934-	Work	1963	Earthenware	54.1 × 39.0 × 19.8 cm	Solo exhibition (Sato Gallery, Tokyo, 1963)
62	S-004	MORITA, Shiryu	1912-1998	Hanshan, a Legendary Chinese Monk and Poet	1969	Sumi ink on paper; four-fold screen	139.5 × 267.0 cm	Solo traveling exhibition in Canada
63	K-301	HAYASHI, Hideyuki	1937-	Talkative	1976	Porcelain; set of 2 pieces	44.0 × 19.5 × 10.0 cm 40.0 × 20.0 × 11.0 cm	
64	K-086	YAGI, Kazuo	1918-1979	Circle	1978	Black earthenware	54.3 × 55.0 × 17.4 cm	Sodeisha Group Exhibition
65	K-265	SUZUKI, Osamu	1926-2001	Whistle of Wind	1989	Earthenware	52.0 × 48.0 × 23.5 cm	Solo exhibition