



# STEVE SLY

JAPANESE WORKS OF ART

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE  
AUTUMN 2024



Cover detail  
PLATE 7  
LACQUER OKIMONO  
Subject - Tigers



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MASTERPIECE



LAPADA  
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## INTRODUCTION

There is little doubt that the finest Japanese works of art destined for national and international expositions during the mid to latter years of that magical Meiji period (1868-1912) literally wowed the audience, as well as propelling the artisans of the previously isolated group of islands that make up Japan, onto the world stage. Indeed, a century and a half later Japanese art aficionados and avid collectors continue to be captivated as market fresh pieces surface from old collections, museum archives and auction houses around the globe, albeit at a much slower pace than in decades past.

I believe this small selection demonstrates this continuing phenomenon, a collection of 25 works that have taken me almost 12 months to source, research and confidently offer to the market.

My own travels, dovetailing with the help of my extensive network of reliable trusted sources has led me directly into European and indeed worldwide collections. My first exciting find, the large iron Jizai crab okimono by Myochin Muneyoshi at plate 3 was unearthed on a personal visit to Japan in November 2023. And so began the quest to find enough market fresh pieces of significant importance, scarcity or simply of a highly decorative merit, that I deemed them worthy of entry into this year's production.

Just a few of my personal favourites are:

The diminutive shakudo and mixed metal box at plate 23 manufactured by one of the leading metalwork masters of the Meiji period, Unno Shomin (1844-1915) certainly fits into the significantly important bracket.

The Iron and mixed metal crab and shell box at plate 9 by Komai of Kyoto simply has to fit into the scarce bracket, certainly to any collector of Komai wares or damascened iron works.

And it would be difficult to argue that the large pair of lacquer Tigers at plate 7 formerly part of an extensive European arms and armour collection are certainly highly decorative, if not a tad comical.

I hope that you enjoy this hand-picked selection of just some of my favourite finds of 2024 as much as I have enjoyed the thrill of sourcing, researching and presenting them to you.

Best Wishes  
Steve

*“Japanese art aficionados and avid collectors continue to be captivated as market fresh pieces surface around the globe”*

## PRICE GUIDE



Up to £15,000



£15,000 - £30,000



£30,000 - £50,000



In excess of £50,000

1

## MIXED METAL EXHIBITION VASE

Subject - Court Lady Amidst Pines

Artist - Takagawa Seisaburo II

A most charming bronze and mixed metal vase that formed part of the Japanese exhibits at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition of 1904. The main body of the vase is formed from an olive green bronze alloy upon which the artist has captured a study of a beautiful court lady amidst young pine trees. The inlaid detail and use of multi coloured alloys is just breathtaking, her kimono is decorated with gold, silver, copper and shakudo alloys, as well as the mixed tones of shibuichi. The artist must have experimented for days if not weeks to produce such a variation of colours. The Court lady poses serenely holding a fan in her left hand with her long black hair falling across her shoulder, she stands amidst young pine trees that are painstakingly inlaid into the bronze with the use of shakudo, minuscule gold inlays represent the grass around the base of the pines. The artist has finished this delightful vase with a silver rim to the top, thankfully he has discreetly inlaid his signature in copper wire to the base.





**Literature:**

Remarkably, we have traced this exact vase to a grainy black and white image at page 59 of the 1904 St Louis exhibition book titled; The Illustrated Catalogue Of Japanese Fine Art Exhibits In The Art Palace At The Louisiana Purchase Exposition. St. Louis, Mo. USA. (see images).

The official catalogue introduction simply titles the bronze vase as “court ladies gathering young pines”, you will note underneath the image at page 59 reads; Shima (Sahei), Osaka. Further extensive research leads us to understand that this was likely the artists commissioning agent representing his pieces at the overseas exhibitions.

As is so often the case, the artists’ names would not be the focal point of a commissioning company’s display at such expositions, the agent would seemingly retain the rights to multiple artists’ works, their contacts were naturally protected and ring fenced under the agent’s branding. The agent presumably taking the financial risks to showcase these works whilst being rewarded with commissions on sales.

**Artist Literature:**

The faint copper seal beneath the vase simply reads Takagawa which leads us to the Takaoka City based artist Takagawa Seisaburo II (1849-1913), he moved to Kyoto where he is recorded as exhibiting at the 2nd and 3rd Naikoku Kangyo Hakurankai exhibitions in 1881 & 1890.

Two examples of this artists work can also be found in the Toyama Museum, the first a round bronze plate with a cockerel and the second a bronze vase inlaid with phoenix.

It may be worth noting that a Mr Takagawa was recorded as the head of design at the Takaoka bronze corporation, there were three generations of Takagawa Seisaburo I-II-III dates ranging between 1813-1925, it would seem highly probable that one of this trio of artisans was that designer.

**Provenance:**

Recently discovered in a long-standing UK gentleman’s Japanese works of art collection.

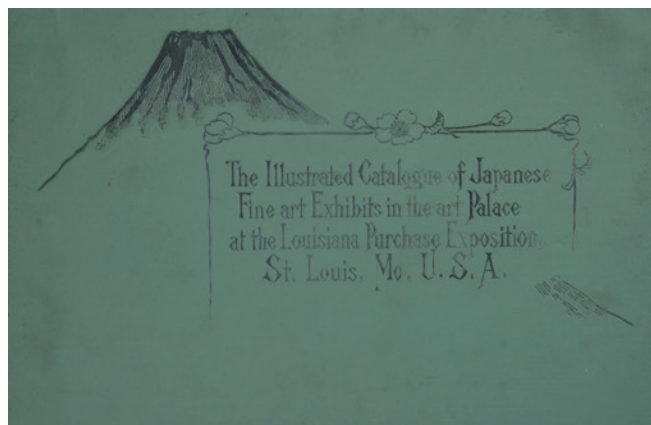
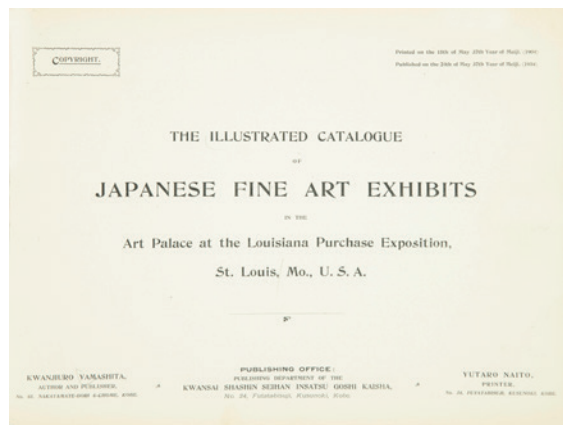
1904 St Louis Exposition.

**Condition report:**

Exceptional condition.

**Approximate sizes:**

Height: 11 1/4” 28.5 cm  
Diameter: 6” 15.2 cm







Flower Vase, of Pine-tree and Woman pattern.  
By Shima (Sahei), Osaka.

2

## SILVER OKIMONO

Subject - Jurojin and Crane

Artist - Yoshihiro

As part of our Japanese works of art exhibition we are delighted to offer this charming pure silver and mixed metal study of a seated Jurojin alongside a red capped crane. This large okimono group is formed from cast pure silver and weighs in at a hefty 106 ounces (3,303 gms). Jurojin's opulent cloak is carved in relief with birds in flight amidst clouds, the border decorated in Greek key pattern simulating silk further decorated in gold. The companion seated crane has pierced feather work presumably intended to function as a koro, the bird's neck and tail plumage formed from shakudo, its red cap finished in enamel. Jurojin holds a removable long silver staff that contains a rolled-up scroll believed to contain details of the lifespan of all living things. The underside of this most serene study is artist signed and carries the Jurojin pure silver mark.

### Literature:

The artist Yoshihiro is recorded as working towards the latter part of the Meiji/ early part of the Taisho period, circa 1910. Jurojin is seen as the God of longevity, the crane by his side is also a symbol of longevity, these birds are so loyal they mate for life. Jurojin can often be seen accompanied by a deer, another animal that symbolises longevity in Asian culture.

### Provenance:

Private USA collection.

### Approximate sizes:

**Height:** 14 1/4" 36 cm

**Width:** 9 1/2" 24 cm

**Depth:** 9" 23 cm

**Weight:** Approx. 3303 gms





3

## IRON JIZAI OKIMONO

Subject - Crab

Artist - Myochin Muneyoshi

A large-scale Meiji Period (1868-1912) articulated iron crab okimono by the well recorded armourer and recognised maker of jizai okimono, Myochin Muneyoshi, his exact dates unknown but extensively recorded as working during the Edo to Meiji period.

On this occasion Myochin has manufactured a larger scale articulated iron crab with moving legs, mouth, pincers and eyes, its shell realistically modelled in fine detail.

This rare creature comes fully artist signed to the underside, stating that it was manufactured by Myochin at the ripe old age of 77. A fascinating and increasingly scarce object that would sit well in any Japanese metalwork collection, whilst also holding a broad appeal to the many Japanese armour collectors who will certainly appreciate the skills involved in hand beating iron in this manner.



**Provenance:**

Purchased directly by myself in Japan.

Previously housed in a private collection of arms and armour related items.

**Condition report:**

Fine age-related condition.

**Approximate sizes:**

**Maximum Width:** 11" 28 cm



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## CLOISONNE HANGING KORO

Artist - Unknown

As part of our Japanese works of art exhibition we are delighted to offer this most unusual Meiji Period (1868-1912) cloisonne enamel hanging koro or incense burner, the vessel formed as a boat at sea. The unknown artist has captured the scene of this vessel navigating crashing waves with the use of blue and white enamels interspersed with silver wires, above the deck a flock of plover circle in anticipation. The koro houses an original removable liner at midships, this could be used for incense or as a receptacle for a small floral display. The boat hangs upon silk cords fixed to the silver suspension rings which are set up for perfect balance. A most unusual highly decorative and functional cloisonne enamel vessel.

**Provenance:**

Japanese collection.

**Condition report:**

Fine condition throughout.

**Approximate sizes:**

**Height:** 2 3/8" 6.5 cm

**Length:** 12" 30.5 cm

**Depth:** 5 1/2" 14 cm







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## PARCEL GILT BRONZE VASES

Artist - Miyao Eisuke of Yokohama

A most unusual shaped pair of carved and gilded bronze vases from the highly regarded studios of Miyao Eisuke of Yokohama. The large and complex six sided vases stand upon a shaped bracket foot that gives rise to a lower section decorated with mythical beast amidst carved and gilt flora. Above this the carved and gilt decoration continues around the six sides as stylised flora interspersed with flaming pearls, minogame and birds in flight, this decoration further continues up to the flared neck rim. The main bodies of each vase house pairs of panels to each elevation thus allowing four panels of your choice to always be on display. One side of the vases displays tranquil scenes of ducks in a lakeside setting beneath trailing wisteria, by contrast the reverse displays scenes of Samurai in various pursuits as well as a seated female attendant alongside a weary traveller. This panel is fully signed and sealed for Miyao Eisuke.

### Literature:

The Miyao Company of Yokohama, under its founder Miyao Eisuke, were prolific manufacturers of small, medium and very large-scale patinated and gilded okimono (bronze ornamental sculptures), as well as all manner of vases and incense burners (Koro). These works often depicted characters from Japanese legend and mythology as well as Samurai and everyday workers. The opulent gilded works were mainly aimed at the western market, primarily visiting tourists in Tokyo and Yokohama where Eisuke had their outlets, as well as the various worldwide expositions where the sheer exoticism of the subject matter together with fine workmanship would appeal to a new emerging audience.

### Condition report:

Fine condition throughout with minimal age-related gilt wear.

### Approximate sizes:

Height:	13 1/4"	33.5 cm
Width:	5 1/2"	14 cm
Depth:	5 1/4"	13.3 cm







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## SILK TEXTILE

Subject - Sea Eagle

Artist - Sozayemon Nishimura

A finely rendered textile study of a sea eagle, the majestic bird of prey captured in a striking pose upon a rocky outcrop amidst a choppy sea. The talented artist has worked the silk in various colours and stitching styles to portray the eagle's feathers and facial features in fine detail, softer tones of silk are used to create the backdrop and landscape which cleverly contrasts the bustling water crashing against the rocks. The textile is bordered with a silk brocade and sits behind glass within its black lacquered frame. The backboard bears the all-important label for arguably the most highly revered manufacturer of the Meiji period, that of the Sozayemon Nishimura. With outlets in Kyoto and Tokyo, Nishimura were to eventually achieve the accolade of becoming suppliers to the Imperial household.

### Condition report:

The silk sits behind glass and remains vibrant with minimal signs of fading or loose threads.

### Approximate sizes:

**Width:** 28" 71 cm

**Height:** 30" 76 cm

**Eagle image only:** 20" x 22" 50 cm x 56 cm





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## LACQUER OKIMONO

Subject - Tigers

As part of our Japanese works of art exhibition we are delighted to offer this most unusual pair of Edo (1603-1868) or Meiji Period (1868-1912) lacquered wooden tigers. These most unusual large felines are carved from a heavy dense native wood in a typical stylised manner, with bulging eyes and strong muscular features as so often depicted in scroll paintings and screens of the Edo Period, in particular by the Nagasaki school of painters. Each carving then coated in a deep red Cinnabar lacquer which is painstakingly applied in multiple layers to achieve a textured finish. Further use of black lacquer accentuates the tigers' stripes and facial features. This opposing pair of tigers are captured with comical expressions exactly as the artist intended, the one on the left looks to be smiling as his companion apparently roars, each tiger with glaring gold and black painted glass eyes. The underside of one cat bears traces of old labels, possibly written in French.

**Provenance:**

Extensive European Collection.

**Condition report:**

Very fine stable condition throughout.

**Approximate sizes:**

<b>Height:</b>	14"	36 cm
<b>Width:</b>	12"	31 cm
<b>Depth:</b>	12"	31 cm







## MIXED METAL BOX

Artist - Kajima Ikkoku II

A delightful iron and mixed metal box from the studios of Kajima Ikkoku, a family business spanning four generations specialising in nunomezogan techniques. This fan shaped iron box is finely decorated to the lid with a plump little sparrow sat upon a branch feeding on the berries, the delightful subject matter crafted in mixed soft alloys including gold, silver and bronze. The exterior of the box is further decorated in gold nunomezogan upon a plain iron ground, the unusual subject matter consists of a praying mantis aside bamboo and berries, a butterfly in flight amidst flora, and most unusually a pair of crabs crawling upon ferns to the rear elevation. The front concave section bears the rather lavish gold signature that translates to Ikkokusai Mitsuyuki, lifting the lid reveals a sumptuous gilt lined interior.

### Literature:

Kajima Ikkoku II was originally known as Mitsutaka until the death of his father in 1882, when he inherited the name Kajima Ikkokusai. He was a Tokyo artist specialising in nunomezogan in his own right, with his work also being recorded as commissions for other famous Tokyo companies such as Tekkodo.

### Provenance:

European collection.

### Condition report:

Lovely age-related condition

### Approximate sizes:

Length:	5"	13 cm
Depth:	3"	8 cm
Height:	1 ¼"	4.5 cm



## IRON LIDDED BOX

Artist - Komai Otojiro I

Company - Komai of Kyoto

As part of our Japanese works of art exhibition we are delighted to offer this incredibly rare iron and mixed metal lidded box, manufactured by the highly regarded Komai company of Kyoto during the latter part of the 19th century. This magnificent box is primarily crafted from iron in the form of a fisherman's wicker basket, the hand woven basket apparently bulging with shells. The lid is further decorated with various shells, pebbles, crustaceans and crabs each formed from mixed alloys, predominantly shakudo and shibuichi as well as silver, copper and iron, with many of the shells splashed in gold to give the impression of algae. Upon removing the lid, you are captivated by the outstanding gilt decoration to the interior of the bowl whilst the inner lid reveals the scenes of famous temples and places of interest in Kyoto. The underside of this remarkable vessel carries the full signature seal of the Komai company; *Dai Nihon Kyōto no jū Komai sei.*

Was it a special commission or destined for exhibition? We may never know, what we can say with a degree of certainty is that it is likely to be a unique example manufactured at the pinnacle of production under the stewardship of Komai Otojiro I, during the final decade of the 19th century.







**Literature:**

One of the most characteristic and desirable types of Meiji Period metalwork are that of the Komai family of Kyoto whose highly detailed damascened work is very distinctive.

The Komai Company was originally founded in 1841 by Komai Seibi, but it was only when Komai Otojiro I became head in 1865 that the company began to make the wares for which they were to become so famous. The workshop, under the leadership of Komai Otojiro specialised in intricate inlaid work of gold and silver into iron. The technique favoured by the workshop was kinsujizogan, the inlay of strips of gold or silver into engraved lines on the iron body, later they were to use nunomezogan which involves the inlay of thin sheets of gold or silver onto a roughened ground. In a promotional brochure of about 1915, Komai Otojiro II (Otojiro I retired in 1906) called his workshop the "pioneer of damascene work". Inevitably during the early 20th century the company increased production to cater for the significant emerging tourist market, with most of their wares now lacquered in black upon a rough surface, and mainly damascened with famous scenes of Japan.

**Provenance:**

Long standing European collection.

**Condition report:**

Superb age-related condition.

**Approximate sizes:**

**Height:** 2 3/8" 6 cm

**Diameter:** 3 1/8" 8 cm







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## MIXED METAL KORO

Attributed - Sansaemon Yoshimasa

A large scale bronze and mixed metal incense burner stemming from the Takaoka school of makers during the 1870/80's period of manufacture.

The Takaoka school artists were based in Ishikawa Prefecture and excelled in bronze casting whilst specialising in high and low relief inlaid techniques. This heavy globular koro rises from three slender legs terminating as mythical beast supports to the sumptuously decorated vessel, the body of which has been lavishly decorated with opposing pairs of stylized birds predominantly formed from shibuichi, further inlaid with gold scale decoration to an exceptional standard, other alloys including gold, silver and copper are used to continue the decoration. Most unusually there is the added element of abalone shell, used not only as decorative fish scale panels but also as the mythical birds claws. We have only ever seen this type of decoration used once before, also on a similar Takaoka school koro. This most unusual characteristic allows us to attribute the piece to one specific artist (see literature). The shoulders and neck rim of the koro are sumptuously inlaid in mixed alloys above which rests the domed cover further decorated with geometric gold and silver detailing to the border and most unusually featuring a Buddha as its finial. This magnificent incense burner is a "tour de force" of mixed metalwork from the highly skilled artisans of the Takaoka school.

**Literature:**

As highlighted in the description the most unusual feature of this mixed metal koro is the fact the artist has used mother of pearl shell within the decoration, including the claws of the mythical beasts' feet.

Extensive research has led us to a very similar koro manufactured by an artist known as Sansaemon Yoshimasa (1851-1895). That koro was Lot 732 of the Sotheby's, London Japanese Works of art sale June 1989, it was 67 cm in height and sold for a premium inclusive £88,000.

It is evident that not only is the subject matter to the rear also mythical birds, but those birds as well as the foo dogs to the front elevation are also decorated with abalone shell claws, the body similarly decorated with abalone fish scale panels.

It is therefore reasonable to assume that our koro was manufactured by the same artist or artists at that time and place. As such, I feel I can confidently attribute this koro's manufacture to Sansaemon Yoshimasa (1851-1895).

The artist is recorded in Takaoka Doji Shi by Yoda Minoru and Takazuka Takeyoshi, as having been awarded the Ohashi nai Koku haku ran kai (prizes) in 1877 & 1881. He also exhibited in Nuremberg 1885 and the Chicago world fair of 1883.

**Condition report:**

Fine condition throughout

**Approximate sizes:**

**Height:** 20"      51 cm  
**Width:** 10"      25.5 cm  
**Depth:** 8"      20.5 cm





# 11

## SATSUMA VASE

Artist - Kinkozan

A larger scale globular Satsuma vase from the studios of the highly regarded Kinkozan of Kyoto. The main theme of this exceptional quality vase are the opposing pairs of overlapping panels framed with gilt bamboo in relief. To one aspect is a traditional scene of ladies and children in a tranquil garden setting, the children flying a kite in the backdrop. Aside this scene is a semi-circular panel containing scholars objects and floral displays upon a gilt decorated cabinet and multiple oriental stands. To the reverse the main panel appears to be an artist kneeling before ladies dressed in lavishly decorated kimono, once again the panel to the side is decorated with objects and floral displays upon a cabinet and oriental display stands. This globular vase stands upon a finely carved gilded base rising to a band of overlapping shaped brocade banners, the bamboo panels interspersed with sumptuous millefiori decoration painted in a manner reserved for the higher echelons of Kinkozan's work. The vase is fully signed to the underside and bears the impressed seal of the Kinkozan studio.

**Provenance:**

Private USA collection.

**Condition report:**

Very fine condition throughout.

**Approximate sizes:**

Height: 7 1/8" 18 cm

Diameter: 6 1/2" 16.5 cm



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## SATSUMA BOWL

Artist - Seikozan

A fine quality fluted Satsuma bowl by the well recorded and highly coveted artist Seikozan. In this instance the artist has painted a complex shaped lobed and fluted bowl, the shape representative of the Imperial chrysanthemum. The interior central roundel features seated scholars from which rise eighteen fluted panels, each painstakingly painted with people in various pursuits interspersed with panels of butterflies and landscapes. Similarly the exterior displays a further eighteen scenes of precious objects as well as people in various pursuits interspersed with panels of flora. The underside of this impressive bowl carries the gilt signature seal for Seikozan.

**Provenance:**

Private USA collection.

Previously recorded on page 222: Satsuma - Romance of Japan, 2011, Louis Lawrence.

**Condition report:**

Fine condition with minimal gilt wear to the rim.

**Approximate sizes:**

**Height:** 3" 7.5 cm

**Diameter:** 5 1/4" 13.5 cm









13

## SATSUMA VASE

Artist - Seikozan

An exceptionally fine Satsuma vase by the well recorded artist Seikozan, on this occasion Seikozan has painted a four-panel vase in exquisite detail, each panel a miniature work of art in their own right. The panels display everyday life in Japan including scenes of cranes at rest and in flight within a lakeside setting, as well as Bijins seated beneath a cherry blossom tree. Each panel is framed with fine gilt borders interspersed with chrysanthemum and geometric diaper patterns, the shoulders finely worked in millefiori beneath the gilded rim. The underside of this jewel of a vase carries the gilt signature seal for Seikozan.

**Provenance:**

Private USA collection.

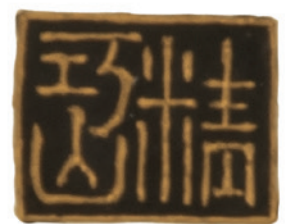
**Condition report:**

Immaculate condition.

**Approximate sizes:**

**Height:** 5"      12.7 cm

**Width:** 2 1/2"    6.3 cm



## SATSUMA PLAQUE

Studio - Kinkozan

Artist - Shuzan

An outstanding quality satsuma plaque produced at the highly respected Kinkozan studios of Kyoto, on this occasion dual artist signed by Shuzan for Kinkozan. The circular plaque provides us with a document of an important historical record of Japan's "Daradara Matsuri" and "Shoga Matsuri" festivals, held in the grounds of the 1,000-year-old Shiba Daijingu Shrine, Tokyo. This event is recognised as Japan's longest festival lasting for 11 days, as such it is affectionately termed the sluggish festival. The plaque is painted in exquisite detail by Shuzan, a retained artist for Kinkozan. We witness outstanding workmanship throughout with multiple banners plotting the various scenes playing out during the celebration. One banner reads "Sanju yonen juunigatsu" (December of the Meiji 34th year), which suggests the date of the plaque to be 1901. A very fine historical record of life in Meiji Period Japan, now recorded in outstanding detail by a highly respected artist painting at a famous studio.

**Literature:**

The banners translations as follows.

**東 芝大神宮** Higashi Shiba Daijingu [Shiba Daijingu Shrine, Tokyo]

**天照宮大神宮** Amaterasu no miya Daijingu [The Amaterasu shrine at the compound of Shiba Daijingu Shrine]

**奉燈** Hoto (written on lanterns), which means "Votive lanterns"

**芝区各町有志者** Shibaku kakumachi yushi sha [Volunteers from all towns in the Shiba district]

**卅四年九月** Sanju yonen kugatsu [September of the (Meiji) 34th year] (1901 in Western Calendar)

**卅四年十二月** Sanju yonen juunigatsu [December of the (Meiji) 34th year] (1901 in Western Calendar year)

**町内会有志者** Chonakai yushisha [Volunteers in Neighbourhood Association]

**天下泰平** Tenka Taihei [Peace and Prosperity (in the world)]

**町内有志** Chonai yushi [Volunteers from Neighbourhood]

**一天四海** Itten Shikai ["The Whole World" - one heaven and the seven seas]

**本家煎餅** Honke senbei [The original rice cracker shop]

**東京府** Tokyo-fu [Tokyo Metropolitan]

**安泰** Antai [Peace and Tranquility]

**来る十月二日大櫓式于時二十** "Kitaru jugatsu futsuka niuji ni Ooyagura-shiki" [The Firefighters Demonstration Display Festival, at 20 (8pm) on the 2nd of October]

**来月十月五日お祭** Omatsuri [15th of the next month/ October, Festival]

**Provenance:**

UK Collection.

**Condition report:**

Fabulous throughout.

**Approximate sizes:**

**Diameter:** 10" 25 cm





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## SATSUMA PANEL

Artist – Ochiai

Company – Rotakudo Studio

A rare Meiji Period (1868-1912) porcelain panel unusually painted by a Satsuma artist working at the Rotakudo studio in Tokyo. The large-scale panel has been painstakingly hand painted in exquisite detail to portray a bustling waterside landscape scene of adults and children in various pursuits during what is likely to be a festival or holiday. One charming scene captures a Bijin being assisted across some stepping stones with the aid of her parasol, another sees a young lad clutching a bamboo fishing rod proudly showing off his latest catch, meanwhile various pursuits are taking place in the numerous pavilions and pagodas against a mountainous backdrop. This fascinating panel is studio signed and bears the artists inscription to the rear.

### Literature:

The signature seal reads “Tokyo Kyobshi, Rotakudo zo” [Made by Rotakudo studio, of the Kyobashi district, Tokyo]

An ink inscription by the painter of this Satsuma panel:

東京都、京橋区、新青街、薩摩陶器画付所、老卓堂、落合造

“Tokyo to, Kyobashi-ku, Shinsei-machi, Satsuma Toki Etsuke-sho, Rotakudo, Ochiai zo”

[Made by Ochiai, at the Rotakudo studio of the Satsuma ware painting studio, Shinsei-machi (Shinjya-cho), Kyobashi district, Tokyo]

### Provenance:

Private USA Collection.

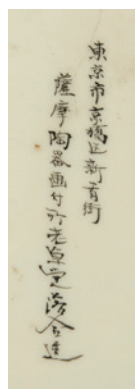
### Condition report:

Fine condition throughout.

### Approximate sizes:

Length: 18 1/4” 46 cm

Height: 12” 30.5 cm









16

## SATSUMA VASE

Subject - Millifiori

Artist - Yabu Meizan

We are delighted to offer this larger scale Satsuma vase decorated by the highly revered artist Yabu Meizan (1853-1934). This tall slender pear-shaped vase is unusually potted in the Chinese Yuhuchunping style. Yabu has certainly picked a complex shape upon which he has predominantly painted native flora to an incredible standard. The carpet of flora (millefiori) includes over-painted chrysanthemums in relief (moriage) above a bamboo trellis bordered by a geometric band upon the foot rim. The elegant slender neck is further decorated with trailing wisteria falling from the softly flared rim. The vase is fully signed Yabu Meizan within a gold seal to the underside.

### Literature:

Yabu Meizan (1853-1934) was a leading figure in the manufacture of Satsuma wares, producing high quality items in lower volume than many of the larger factories of the period.

His early works won multiple prizes at the various world expositions from Paris 1889 through to San Francisco 1915. His pieces were in such demand even at that time, with some of the finest items now residing in the world's leading Japanese works of art collections and museums. Following the first world war period Yabu continued to decorate blanks, but now in higher volume with much simpler decoration of sprigs of maple or birds within autumnal foliage, he continued until his death in 1934 aged 80.

### Condition report:

Fabulous condition throughout.

### Approximate sizes:

Height: 9 5/8" 24.5 cm

Diameter: 4" 10 cm



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## SATSUMA KOGO (INCENSE BOX)

Company - Kinkozan

Attributed - Sozan

As part of our Japanese works of art exhibition we are delighted to offer this oversized Satsuma ware circular incense box (kogo) painted at the highly regarded Kinkozan studios. The kogo's quality of paintwork and subject matter are typical of the output of the factory retained artist Sozan. The lid of this deep box depicts four charming scenes of a waterfall, a cockerel amidst flora, butterflies and a dragonfly in flight, as well as the character Momotaro (peach boy) sat amidst his animals dressed in robes, the remainder of the lid decorated with finely painted flora. The underside of the kogo is decorated with a band of a dozen individually decorated overlapping fans interspersed with roses upon a fine gilt ground, the base also carries the signature seal and impressed mark for Kinkozan. The edges to the box meet up in an exact way to display multicoloured diaper pattern shapes upon a vibrant gilt ground, however, as is often the case with the best Meiji period artworks, this artist has left the best until last. As you open the box you reveal two sumptuously decorated interior scenes of native fruits and vegetables painted in the finest detail against a ground of finely stippled gold dust. The very traditional Japanese taste and simply exquisite paintwork are certainly from the higher echelons of the Kinkozan studios output, and highly likely to be a work by Sozan.

### Condition report:

Fine condition with minimal age-related wear.

### Approximate sizes:

Height: 2 1/4" 6 cm

Diameter: 4 1/4" 11 cm







## SHIBAYAMA DISPLAY CABINET

Artist - Ryuho-Ota

An exceptionally fine display cabinet (Shodana). The main body of this cabinet is formed from a native hardwood and stands upon a scrolling base, the staggered display shelves and cabinet sides are decorated with carved fretwork depicting birds in flight and flora. The main Shibayama style decoration is exquisitely crafted with gold lacquer, ivory, abalone and various colour hardstones adorning the iron wood door panels and drawer fronts, the artists have signed and sealed the panels in multiple places. The main theme of birds, insects and flora continues throughout much of the decoration however there are some most unusual scenes amongst the multiple panels, including a Sarumawashi (monkey trainer) surrounded by children at play, as well as a couple resting beneath a tree as a father and son catch insects. The larger left-hand panel is decorated with a delightful display of hydrangea and other flora within a stone vase upon which a bird lands to pluck an insect, this panel lifts out to reveal a large storage space.

For me the most interesting scene adorns the pair of doors to the right of the cabinet, this tells the story of Sesshu Toyo (1420-1506) arguably Japan's most famous painter (see literature). This pair of doors open to reveal a sumptuously decorated interior of drawers and further storage, the interior scenes lavishly worked in lacquer, ivory as well as semi-precious stones and shells. This particular pair of doors close with a mixed metal clasp and are signed and sealed by an artist named Ryuho with a further name of Ota, possibly a surname.

**Literature:**

Although not a household name like the woodblock prints artists Hokusai or Hiroshige, Sesshu is far more important in Japanese history of art. Indeed, of the 162 paintings classified as National Treasures by the Japanese government, 6 are by Sesshu. This, even though there are only about 20 surviving works that can be definitively attributed to him, whereas the next most honoured artist has just 3.

Sesshu was born to a lower-ranking samurai family in 1420 in what is today, Okayama Prefecture. He was sent to a local temple called Hofuku-ji to train to become a Zen priest, but, according to a well-known legend, Sesshu was so obsessed with drawing that he neglected his religious studies to the point that the head priest tied him up to a pillar (tree) as punishment. When the priest returned to see how Sesshu was doing he saw a mouse moving about at the foot of the pillar and rushed to prevent the novice monk from being bitten. Lo and behold, Sesshu had used his toe to shape the tears he had wept in the dust at his feet, into the shape of a life-like mouse. Another version of the story even has it that the mouse gnawed away the ropes that bound the boy.

Our cabinet perfectly depicts the mouse that Sesshu has drawn with his toes as well as mice gnawing the rope to free him.

**Condition report:**

Minor age-related usage marks, no Shibayama losses, now waxed ready for home use.

**Approximate sizes:**

**Height:** 73 1/2" 187 cm  
**Width:** 58" 147.5 cm  
**Depth:** 18" 46 cm

This cabinet is registered with Defra (certificate no. CMK4TBPP) due to its minimal (de minimis) ivory content.







19

## DAMASCENED IRON KORO

Artist - Komai Otojiro (1842-1917)

An outstanding quality damascened iron lidded koro or censor manufactured by the Komai company of Kyoto. The large squat vessel rests upon four scrolling feet that give rise to segmented panels separated with silver borders. Each panel interspersed with roundels containing scenes of famous landmarks or legendary tales, all reserved on interwoven bands of chrysanthemum, Chinese grasses and stylised bats. The lavish decoration rendered in gold and silver nunomezogan. The vessel houses a tall lobed cover again sumptuously decorated to match the base, surmounted with a Lotus bud finial for the escape of incense. The underside signed "Saiko no Ju Komai Sei", within a seal, translating to read "made by Komai Otojiro (1842-1917) of Saiko". Saiko being the western capital of Japan, which of course today is better known as Kyoto. This jewel of Japanese damascened Ironwork comes complete with its inner wooden and outer lacquer tomobako's for safe storage and transportation.

### Literature:

See literature at plate 9.

### Provenance:

Part of a distinguished UK gentleman's collection.

### Condition report:

Very fine condition.

### Approximate sizes:

Height: 10 3/8" 26.5 cm

Diameter: 8 5/8" 22 cm











20

## SILVER & SHIBUICHI VASE

Artist - Hashimoto Isshi II

Company - Ozeki

A very fine quality mixed metal vase bearing the seal of arguably the most successful retailer of the late 19th century, that of the Ozeki company, headed up by Ozeki Yahei and his son Sadajiro. This beautifully decorated diminutive jewel of a vase is formed from solid shibuichi cleverly merged with silver to give the impression of snow melting down the body, the peonies painstakingly manufactured from mixed alloys including gold, silver and shibuichi. This remarkably heavy little vase comes complete within its original hardwood tomobako as well as its original silk protective sleeve and finely carved hardwood display stand. The signature on the side of the vase reads Isshi Koku (carved by Isshi) and refers to the artist Hashimoto Isshi II (active 1871-1903). The underside of the vase is stamped with the highly revered Ozeki seal as well as a commemorative seal, presumably intended as a presentation gift.

**Provenance:**

Recent Japanese collection.

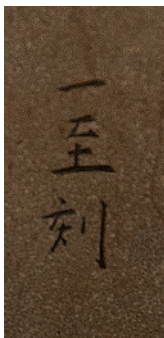
**Condition report:**

Very fine condition.

**Approximate sizes:**

**Height:** 7 7/8" 20 cm (inc stand)

**Diameter:** 2.75" 7.1 cm





21

## SILVER & SHIBUICH VASE

Artist - Mitsutoshi

Company - Ozeki

As part of our Japanese works of art exhibition we are delighted to offer the second of these diminutive mixed metal vases bearing the seal of arguably the most successful retailer of the late 19th century, that of the Ozeki company, headed up by Ozeki Yahei and his son Sadajiro. This jewel of a vase is formed from solid shibuichi cleverly merged with silver to give the impression of snow melting down the body, the cherry blossoms painstakingly manufactured from mixed alloys including gold, silver and shibuichi. This remarkably heavy little vase comes complete within its original hardwood tomobako as well as its original silk protective sleeve and finely carved hardwood display stand. The signature on the side of the vase reads Mitsutoshi Koku (carved by Mitsutoshi). The underside of the vase is stamped with the highly revered Ozeki seal as well as a commemorative seal, presumably intended as a very opulent gift.

**Provenance:**

Recent Japanese collection.

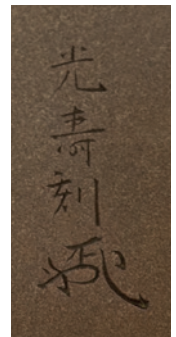
**Condition report:**

Very fine condition.

**Approximate sizes:**

Height: 7 7/8" 20 cm (inc stand)

Diameter: 2.75" 7.1 cm



22

## DAMASCENED PLAQUE

Artist - Komai Otojiro (1842-1917)

Company - Komai of Kyoto

We are delighted to offer this most interesting damascened iron panel manufactured by the highly regarded Komai company of Kyoto during the latter part of the 19th century. This most unusual panel is formed as cut out examples of Komai wares including plates, a vase, a koro and other objects each overlapping in a three-dimensional fashion. The gold and silver Nunomezogan workmanship is quite exquisite and in remarkable original condition.

After much deliberation I must conclude that this framed panel was possibly used as an advertising tool at expositions or for traveling salesman promoting the range of wares and quality of workmanship provided by the Komai company at that time. The ironwork panel is fitted to its original crimson baize lined backboard that has now been sympathetically re-framed to preserve it for another 140 years, the panel carries the full signature seal for Komai Otojiro (1842-1917).

### Literature:

See literature at plate 9.

### Condition report:

Lovely condition, now housed in modern non reflective glazed frame.

### Approximate sizes:

#### The Metalwork:

Height: 4" 10 cm

Width: 6" 15 cm

#### The Frame:

Height: 9 3/4" 25 cm

Width: 12 5/8" 32.5 cm





23

## MIXED METAL LIDDED BOX

Artist - Unno Shomin

As part of our Japanese works of art exhibition we are absolutely delighted to offer this incredibly scarce mixed metal lidded box by arguably the greatest metalworker of the period, Unno Shomin (1844-1915). The box of complex quatrolobe form is predominantly manufactured from shakudo finely inlaid with interlocking circles of pure gold, the interior and underside of the box lined in pure silver.

There is no doubting the hand of the metalwork master, Shomin, when studying the lid of this box, a "tour de force" of soft metal chiselling and complex inlaid metals portrays a scene of three of Japan's most famous poets (see literature) upon a finely hand punched Nanako ground. The workmanship particularly to the inlays of the gowns is simply breathtaking, here Shomin has employed all of his skills as a former Mito school sword fitting master, resulting in a jewel of a box that will stand up to the strictest scrutiny of the most fastidious Japanese metalwork aficionados. Shomin has chiselled his signature upon the lid of this masterful box above his trademark Kao.











**Literature:**

Unno Shomin (1844-1915) is perhaps the most famous of the generation of metalworkers who started their careers in the sword-fitting workshops of Mito, he moved to nearby Tokyo in the early Meiji era, changing his name from Motohira to Shomin. He showed great promise from an early age, studying calligraphy and painting in addition to chiselling, and was soon awarded the art-name Shomin, "superior to [So]min," in the expectation that his work would one day excel even that of Yokoya Somin (1670-1733), a famed mid-Edo-period master.

After the samurai privilege of wearing swords was revoked in 1876, Shomin threw himself into the development of new types of products for both Japanese and international customers. He frequently exhibited his works at expositions inside and outside of Japan. Shomin eventually served as a professor at Tokyo Art School and in 1896 was appointed to the order of Teishitsu Gigeiin (Artist-Craftsman to the Imperial Household).

**Subject:**

The charming subject matter depicts Ono no Komachi, Kakinomoto no Hitomaro and Ki no Tsurayuki, three of Japan's great immortal poets of the Heian Period. Kakinomoto no Hitomaro is often portrayed in his contemplative pose to strike up waka poems, as depicted here.

All three are included in the Six Immortal Poets (Rokkasen) and also the thirty-six immortal poets (Sanjurokkasen).

**Provenance:**

Japanese Metalwork Collection.

**Condition report:**

Fine condition.

**Approximate sizes:**

**Height:** 1 1/8" 2.8 cm

**Length:** 3 3/8" 8.6 cm

**Depth:** 2 1/2" 6.4 cm



24

## SHIBAYAMA & LACQUER VASES

Artist - Unknown

A delightful pair of shibayama decorated lacquer vases formed as moon flasks. These charming vases are predominantly decorated with fine quality Shibayama style decoration upon a vibrant gold lacquer ground, the first aspect depicting Manchurian cranes in flight and at rest within a stream that meanders across each vase. The reverse depicts a delightful scene of birds amidst trailing wisteria above a sensational quality silk brocade decorated scrolling banner, that once again runs across both vases. The Shibayama decoration carved from semi-precious hardstones and coral as well as multiple native shells.

A further most unusual aspect is the finely carved decoration upon the blood red lacquer ground of the main body of these vases, here we witness mythical beasts and birds in flight amidst stylised flora, the interior of the vases finished in a vibrant nashi-ji speckled ground.

**Provenance:**

Private UK based gentleman's Japanese collection.

Previously part of the Joe Marshall collection sold in Sotheby's 2001, lot number 522.

**Condition report:**

Outstanding condition throughout.

**Approximate sizes:**

**Height:** 7 7/8"    20 cm  
**Width:** 5"        13 cm  
**Depth:** 2"        5 cm





## LARGE MIXED METAL VASES

Artist - Sugiura Yukimune

Designer - Sakai Doitsu

Company - Kiritsu Kosho Kaisha

A magnificent pair of large scale mixed metal vases crafted at the studios of the Kiritsu Kosho Kaisha (the governments first trading and manufacturing company), on this occasion by one of the lead artists Sugiura Yukimune (1856-1901) at this time working under the directorship of the soon to become Imperial artist, Suzuki Chokichi.

This handsome pair of vases are based on a design by the Rimpa school painter Sakai Doitsu (1846-1913), a retained artist working for the company, indeed the signature "Doitsu zu, Yukimune sen kore", with the gold seal "Sugiura" bears testament to Doitsu's involvement in this fine collaboration. The large heavy quality baluster shaped vases stand upon a spreading bracket foot decorated with mixed metal moths beneath a band of stylized flora, the bronze bodies provide a super contrast to the opulent mixed metal decoration depicting birds at rest upon the branches of fruit trees. The incredibly worked feather detail and foliage in relief is formed from soft alloys including gold, silver, copper and shibuichi to an extremely high level of workmanship. To the reverse we witness exquisite sprays of gold narcissus to one vase with sprigs of native flora to the other, the shoulders and neck rims decorated in mixed alloys with stylized moths amidst trailing flora. Each vase bears the artists signatures and gold seal to one side.

### Literature:

Sugiura Yukimune (1856-1901) worked for the First Trading and Manufacturing Company founded in 1873 by the Meiji government under the stewardship of lead artist and designer Suzuki Chokichi, he worked alongside his older brother Sugiura Yukinari, his dates unknown. They both exhibited at the Paris Exposition of 1900, Yukimune eventually became a lecturer in metalwork at the Tokyo School of Art until his untimely death in 1901 aged 43.

His works can now be found in leading collections and museums around the world.

See: Khalili Collections - Metalwork Vol I for works by both brothers in collaboration with Suzuki Chokichi for the Kiritsu Kosho Kaisha.

One example of our artists work can be found at Plate 3. A magnificent 48 cm lobed vase displays an owl landing upon a pine tree, it is dated circa 1885.

As previously suggested, the design for our vases was likely based on a painting or drawing by the Rimpa School artist Sakai Doitsu (1846-1913) 酒井道. Doitsu is recorded as an artist and designer at the Kiritsu Kosho Kaisha, he was the son of Yamamoto Sodo, a pupil of Sakai Hoitsu (1761-1828) who was responsible for reviving the Korin style in Edo in the early 19th century.

Doitsu studied painting with another of Hoitsu's pupils, Nozaki Shin'ichi (1821-99) and ultimately succeeded as fourth-generation head of the Uge-an lineage (named after Hoitsu's studio), faithfully perpetuating the Rimpa (or Rinpa) style in the Meiji era (1868-1912). These vases bear his name alongside that of the metalworker Sugiara. "Doitsu zu, Yukimune sen kore", with the gold seal "Sugiura".

### Condition report:

Very fine condition with minimal age-related wear.

### Approximate sizes:

<b>Height:</b>	21"	53.5 cm
<b>Width:</b>	10 1/4"	26 cm
<b>Depth:</b>	9"	23 cm











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