

Cover detail
PLATE 2
MIXED METAL JARDINIERE
Artist – Suzuki Chokichi (1844-1919)
Company – Kiritsu Kosho Kaisha



EXHIBITION CATALOGUE AUTUMN 2025



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INTRODUCTION

I am delighted to present to you my Autumn 2025 exhibition catalogue, it has been an absolute joy to bring these works of art in from literally all corners of the globe to showcase them for your enjoyment.

Amongst the various works of art in this year's catalogue I proudly present a hand-picked selection of metalworks from such luminary artists as Unno Shomin, Suzuki Chokichi and Tsukada Shukyo. Each deservingly granted the highest possible accolade of becoming Imperial artists to the Emperor Meiji. (Teishitsu Gigei-in), individually recognised as achieving the pinnacle of metalwork production during this golden period.

The Imperial Household artist system was established in 1890 (Meiji 23) to continue and further develop these fine metalworking skills under the protection of the Imperial family.

Kano Natsuo (1828-1898), the leading metalwork artist of the time, was appointed a member at the outset. Natsuo became the first professor at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts metalwork course and taught the next generation of artists. Later Unno Shomin (1844-1915), Suzuki Chokichi (1844-1919) and Kagawa Katsuhiro (1853-1917) all highly skilled metal carvers of the Meiji period were appointed as Imperial Household artists. They each perfected techniques that had been developed throughout the Edo period. In 1913 Tsukada Shukyo (1848-1918) joined the handful of luminary artists to achieve such status.

I invite you to discover and enjoy viewing works by these Imperial artists as part of this year's exhibition catalogue.

Best wishes Steve

"It is reasonable to suggest that many of these artists exquisite works reached the pinnacle of human skill"

PRICE GUIDE









1

GOLD LACQUER KORO

Artist – Masatomo



An exceptionally fine Meiji period (1868-1912) gold lacquer Shibayama encrusted Koro in the form of a caparisoned elephant. The magnificent beast stands resplendent upon its period hardwood and gold lacquer stand, its body bejewelled with semi-precious stones and shells each inlaid to an exceptional standard by a well recorded exponent of this type of decoration, generically referred to as Shibayama.

The elephants back houses a Shibayama decorated blanket upon which rests a gilt lined receptacle formed as a pierced lidded koro, surmounted with a crystal ball within a large lotus bloom. The elephants tusks are fashioned from gilt metal, its beautifully carved facial expression, particularly the eyes, give the impression of a very happy and content elephant. The silver signature seal inset beneath one of the front feet refers to the recorded Shibayama artist "Masatomo". An increasingly scarce gold lacquer okimono that would sit well in any setting.

Provenance:

Long standing UK collection.

Condition report:

The overall condition is good with minimal age-related rubbing and no losses to the Shibayama decoration.

*The Shibayama decoration does not contain ivory.

Approximate sizes:

Elephant only:

Height: 7 1/2" 19 cm **Width:** 8 5/8" 22 cm

Display stand:

 Height:
 2"
 5 cm

 Width:
 8 3/8"
 21.5 cm

 Depth:
 7 1/4"
 18.5 cm









2 MIXED METAL JARDINIERE

Artist – Suzuki Chokichi (1844-1919) Company – Kiritsu Kosho Kaisha



A most charming mixed metal jardiniere manufactured by the highly acclaimed Imperial artist Suzuki Chokichi (1848-1919), his art name Kako. On this occasion Chokichi has manufactured a heavy gauge bronze and mixed metal jardiniere most unusually depicting a red squirrel as its main subject matter, the charming creature clambering upon the branch of a berry tree, its fur and facial features finely rendered in mixed alloys to striking effect. The body of the planter further decorated with decaying foliage to an extraordinary standard, instantly recognisable as the work of Chokichi, the shoulders and base bordered with geometric bands of mixed metal moths.

The underside carries the oval impressed signature seal for Kako beneath the double mountain mark of the Kiritsu Kosho Kaisha, the government sponsored first manufacturing company where Chokichi worked as designer and lead artist until its closure in 1891. This period prior to being rewarded with the highest possible accolade in 1896, that of Imperial artist (Teishitsu Gigei-in), a very rare example of Kakos work from the mid 1880's Meiji period.

Literature:

Despite extensive research, this particularly rare model does not appear to have been recorded in any sold archives or housed in any of the well-known Japanese art collections. I was however delighted to find the drawings at plate 50, pages 62-63 of the Kiritsu Kosho Kaisha design book. Edited by Prof. Toyojiro Hida (see images).

In Japanese and indeed Chinese folklore, a squirrel and grapes subject symbolise fertility, prosperity and abundance.

Provenance:

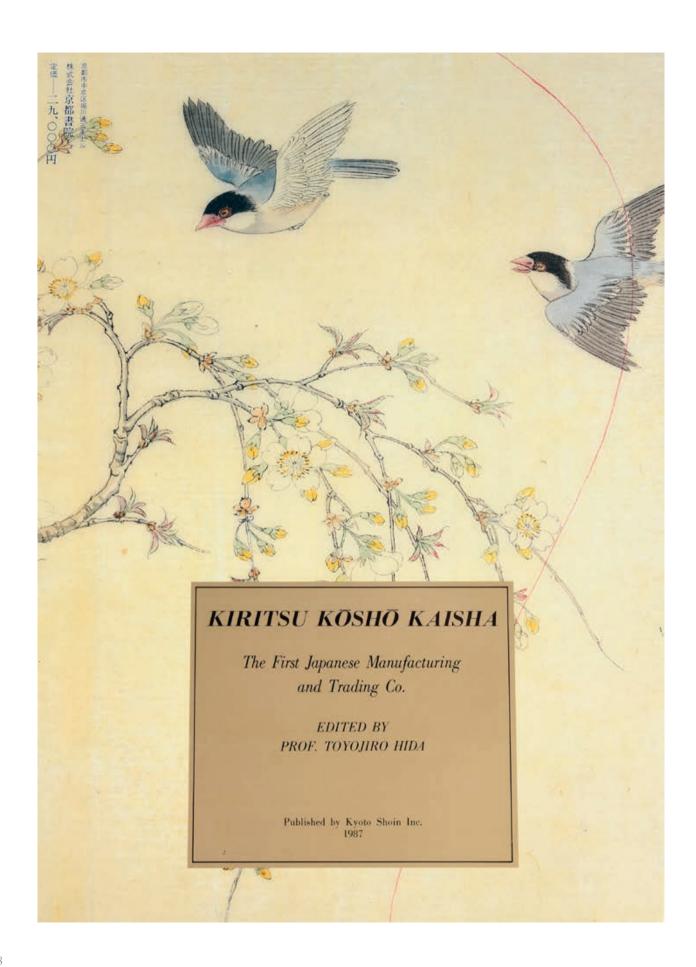
Unearthed in the USA, reputedly having been in Boston family ownership since its original purchase. It is quite possible that this jardiniere was exhibited at the Boston Exposition of 1884 and had remained in the area ever since.

Condition report:

Fine condition throughout.

Approximate sizes:

Height: 10 1/4" 26 cm **Diameter:** 12" 30.5 cm







MIXED METAL VASES

Artist – Suzuki Chokichi (attributed) Company – Kiritsu Kosho Kaisha

A fine quality pair of Meiji period (1868-1912) bronze and mixed metal vases firmly attributed to the Imperial artist Suzuki Chokichi (1848-1919). The main body of these heavy gauge bronze vases are cast in multi patinated autumnal colours of a style and technique that instantly shouts Chokichi. The vases further decorated with mixed metal leaf, vine and berries, the gold berries having attracted a bee in flight to one vase and a bee at rest upon the other. Chokichi has once again chosen mythical beast with suspension rings as the side handles whilst further decorating the neck rims with wire work in the form of stylised moths. A fine pair of lavishly decorated mixed metal vases from the Imperial metalworker, lead designer and director of the Kiritsu Kosho Kaisha (The first governments sponsored manufacturing company).

Literature:

Though unsigned, we can confidently attribute these vases to Chokichi, they did originally form part of a three-piece garniture (pictured) that included a fully signed jardiniere manufactured during his time at the Kiritsu Kosho Kaisha.

Provenance:

USA collection, by repute the Boston based family purchased the garniture in the 19th c and had retained ownership ever since.

Condition report:

Lovely age-related original condition.

Approximate sizes:

 Height:
 10 1/2"
 26.7 cm

 Width:
 6"
 15.2 cm

 Depth:
 4 1/2"
 11.5 cm







4 MIXED METAL VASE Artist – Suzuki Chokichi



A very fine bronze and mixed metal vase by the highly skilled Imperial artist Suzuki Chokichi. On this occasion Chokichi has manufactured a bronze trumpet shaped vase of waisted form decorated in exquisite detail with the use of mixed alloys, the main body of the vase is predominately decorated with sprigs of native flora contrasted with Chokichi's trademark patinated mixed metal foliage. The vase is further decorated with upper and lower bands of butterflies in flight between formal gilt borders. The underside of this heavy quality highly decorative vase is signed within an oval cartouche that translates to read "made by Kako of great Japan", an increasingly scarce example of Meiji period metalwork from a leading Imperial artist.

Literature:

Suzuki Chokichi (Kako) was director, designer and lead artist of the government sponsored Kiritsu Kosho Kaisha Company until its closure in 1891, his adventurous artistic ideas were reputedly not always well received by the government funded factory, they probably had one eye on commercial quantity and more repetitive works than Kako would have liked.

It was following on from this closure that Chokichi went on to produce many other individual high quality and now famous works housed around the world's great collections and leading museums including a monumental 2.8m Koro surmounted by an eagle which resides in the Victoria and Albert Museum. Arguably his most famous known work, a set of twelve mixed metal birds of prey, now rightfully resting in the Tokyo National Museum. It was during this period that this vase would have been manufactured by Kako, having now replaced the company double mountain seal with his own unique oval signature.

Condition report:

Fine condition throughout.

Approximate sizes:

Height: 11 1/2" 29 cm **Diameter:** 6 1/4" 16 cm



5

IMPERIAL SILVER KORO

Artist – Tsukada Shukyo (1848-1918)





A large pure silver Koro by the highly acclaimed Imperial artist Tsukada Shukyo (1848-1918), on this occasion in collaboration with Kurokawa Yoshikatsu. The globular body set on three legs with loop handles is inspired by the ancient Chinese ding form. The front and reverse each finely decorated with the Imperial chrysanthemum crest (kikkamonshō), rendered as a stylized chrysanthemum with sixteen full and sixteen half petals arranged in alternation, a motif reserved exclusively for the Japanese Imperial Household and among the most important state and symbolic emblems of Japan. The upper rim encircled by a continuous key-fret band, the cover finely pierced in the form of a chrysanthemum surmounted by a seated shishi. This larger scale incense burner fully signed, Teishitsu Gigei-in Tsukada Shûkyô and kaô, this particular signature would indicate a date of manufacture between 1913 when Shukyo was granted the Imperial artist status (Teishitsu Gigei-in) and his death in 1918.

Literature:

The seal to the underside of the koro indicates a collaboration with the metalworker Kurokawa Yoshikatsu (1867-1949) his art name Kyukosai, this artist is recorded as running a metal workshop in Tokyo.

For a further example of collaborative works by these two artists see - Christies, New York, Japanese and Korean Art, 18th April 2018, lot 69. A silver inlaid vase manufactured in 1909, sale result \$60,000.

Tsukada Shûkyô (1848-1918), also known by his art name Shinyusai, was a distinguished Japanese metal artist of the Meiji period. His art name pays homage to his mentors: 'Shin' from Shibata Zeshin (1807-1891), a renowned painter and lacquer artist, and 'Yu' from Kano Natsuo (1828-1898), a master metalworker. Under their tutelage, Shûkyô honed his skills in both painting and metalwork leading to a unique fusion of these disciplines in his creations.

In 1913, Shûkyô was appointed as an artist to the Imperial Household (Teishitsu Gigei-in), a prestigious title awarded to artists who made significant contributions to Japanese art and culture. This recognition followed his demonstration of metal carving techniques to Emperor Meiji, highlighting his exceptional craftsmanship. Shukyo's works are celebrated for their intricate designs and the use of various metal alloys, many of these masterpieces are preserved in the worlds leading collections and museums including the Khalili collections and Sannomaru Shozo Kan (The Museum of the Japanese Imperial Collection).

Provenance:

European collection.

Condition report:

Very fine condition throughout.

Approximate sizes:

 Height:
 8 1/4"
 21cm

 Diameter:
 5 1/2"
 14 cm

 Weight:
 62 oz
 1931 gms









6 OKIMONO DOVES

Artist - Maruki Company



A large fine quality bronze okimono of a pair of doves from the studios of the highly regarded Maruki Company. The birds perch upon a rustic root wood base set at differing heights to offer a most enchanting perspective of what could be portrayed as the male protecting the female. The larger bird, presumably the male, stands wings outstretched looking down at his plump companion resting with her eyes half closed, her plumage tightly tucked. Each of the birds' feathers are cast in fine detail with mixed metal shakudo and gilt eyes for contrast. The underside of the larger bird is fitted with a square seal that reads Nihon Koku Maruki Sei, made by Maruki Company of great Japan.

Literature:

For an almost identical example of this group see: Khalili collections, Metalwork II, plate 103.

Condition report:

Very fine condition throughout.

Approximate sizes:

Height: 16" 41 cm Width: 12 1/4" 31 cm Depth: 9 3/4" 25 cm

7 MIXED METAL TABLE CABINET

Artist – Takakazu Company – Inoue of Kyoto



A very fine bronze and mixed metal miniature cabinet fully artist signed and produced at the highly acclaimed Inoue Company of Kyoto. This heavy quality little cabinet is decorated to the two front doors with a cockerel upon a plum tree looking down at ducks in the water, the sides further decorated with birds amidst flora. The rear of the cabinet displays a scene of cranes in flight upon a moonlit sky, each scene bordered by a saya patterned ground. The top of the cabinet displays various landscape scenes within roundels. Upon opening the doors you reveal a sumptuous interior with an array of shakudo drawers and shelves finely worked in mixed alloys displaying Mount Fuji and other tranquil scenes, the interior of the doors reveal a pair of Ho-o birds in flight.

This opulent little jewel of a cabinet is artist signed to the front door, Takakazu with kao, a Meiji period artist on this occasion working for the Inoue Company of Kyoto, the silver Inoue Company seal is to be found to the underside.

Provenance:

UK gentleman's collection.
Previously sold: Christies London, lot 171, 17th Nov 1998.

Condition report:

Good condition with minimal age-related wear.

Approximate sizes:

 Height:
 5 1/2"
 14 cm

 Width:
 4 1/2"
 11.4 cm

 Depth:
 2 3/4"
 7 cm







SHIBUICHI CIGARETTE CASE

Artist – Yamada Motonobu (1847-1897)



A most unusual Meiji Period (1868-1912) shibuichi and mixed metal decorated case by the highly acclaimed Ozeki retained metalworker, Yamada Motonobu (1847-1897), his art name Inshi. Here Motonobu has crafted a cigarette case of rounded rectangular form, the case opens on a spring push to reveal a silver lining.

The scene on the exterior depicts a procession of fish dressed in robes, apparently wading through water to reach a group of temples in the distance. The most unusual scene continues to the reverse where mixed metal shells and seaweed are also depicted below the artist signature, which reads Inshi Motonobu Koku.

It is interesting to note when studying the artists remarkable chisel work that it appears to capture the entire scene emanating from the giant clamshell, very subtle changes to the shibuichi ground are detected. A fascinating example of Japanese folklore bought to life in mixed metals by one of the leading artists of the 19th century.





Literature:

This enchanting scene depicts the messenger-retainers (fishy human like sea creatures, called Ryugu no tsukai) of the Dragon King of the Sea (Ryujin) together with his Palace, all appearing in a mysterious bubble coming out of the giant clamshell (Hamaguri), much like a dream or mirage.

Yamada Motonobu (1847-97) his art name Inshi, was one of the finest of the Meiji period metalwork artists coming from a family which had served as retainers to the Mito branch of the Tokugawa family. Motonobu apparently started learning his incredible metalwork skills aged only 13, although sadly he also died at a very young age. He is well recorded as an artist commissioned by the notable metalwork retailers the Ozeki company and is also recorded as having served the Imperial Household in 1877.

For further examples by the artist, see the Nasser D Khalili collection, Treasures of Imperial Japan, Metalwork I, plates 51, 55, 56 and 60.

Also see: Steve Sly Japanese Works of art, 2020 Vision of an enlightened ruler volume I, for a remarkable mixed metal Crab okimono by this artist.

Condition report:

Very fine condition throughout.

Approximate Sizes:

 Height:
 3 1/2"
 9 cm

 Width:
 2 5/8"
 6.5 cm

 Depth:
 5/8"
 1.8 cm

9 SILVER INCENSE BURNERS Artist – Hasegawa Issei (Gyokutosai) A quite magical pure silver and mixed metal okimono group by the highly regarded artist Hasegawa Issei, his art name Gyokutosai. These unusually large-scale mixed metal cranes are formed as incense burners (Koro), each with lift off sections of pierced featherwork to their backs revealing silver lined containers for incense. The highly skilled artist has captured these birds in a most serene pose, the male bird watching over the female who stoops before him. The chisel work to the feathers is of an exceptional standard, the shibuichi legs and beaks are particularly finely worked as are the shakudo tail feathers, the red capped crowns finished in enamel. These birds peg into their original carved root wood base and are individually signed to the underside, one reads Issei Koku (carved by Issei), the other simply reads Gyokutosai. A quite magical scene of mystical birds that mate for life, as such they represent longevity in Asian culture.



Literature:

Hasegawa Issei (his art name Gyokutosai) worked in Asakusa, Tokyo during the Meiji and Taisho era. He exhibited at the Chicago Columbus Exposition (1893), the Paris Exposition (1900) exhibiting a silver vase, incense burner and a bird subject okimono and at the Liège Exposition (1905) where he exhibited a crystal ball on a metal base.

The Kyoto Sannenzaka Museum houses several works by this artist.

The Khalili collection has two works by this artist reproduced in The Meiji no Takara, Metalwork Vol I – plate 66, and Vol II – plate 130.

Condition report:

 ${\it Excellent condition throughout.}$

Approximate sizes:

Height: 17 1/2" 44.5 cm (overall)

 Width:
 27"
 68.5 cm

 Depth:
 14"
 35.5 cm







10

EMBROIDERED TEXTILE SCREEN

A very fine floor standing fourfold screen worked in various stitching techniques and coloured silk threads resulting in a continuous landscape scene portraying famous Japanese views. These include the Kinkakuji in Kyoto, the gateway at Nikko, the Itsukushima Shrine at Miyajima, the bridge at Kameido Shrine, Meotoiwa at Ise as well as the iconic Mount Fuji rising in the distance. The four panels are housed within their original black lacquer frame, the borders carved in exquisite blind fret detail with flora and butterflies inset upon a gilt background for contrast.

Literature:

There is little doubt that a major part of the phenomenon of Japanese works of art exploding onto the worldwide stage during the Meiji period was bought about by the textile manufacturers of Kyoto, the most recognized of which will undoubtedly be the Nishimura Company, founded in Kyoto in 1670. Latterly in competition with a company founded in 1831 by lida Shinshichi I (1803-1874), as a small retailer of non-silk drapery products. This modest shop called Takashimaya would through successive generations of the lida family quickly rise to prominence as a major player in the textile market, becoming Imperial Household suppliers and ultimately stiff competition for the established Nishimura Company.

Clearly there was demand for two such important companies in what was at the time and remains today, a red-hot market for arguably the finest textiles ever produced. The best examples are as highly coveted today as they were during this innovative period, though obviously much scarcer, with many of the finest textiles now preserved in the world's leading museums and collections.

The above plotted history can offer only the briefest insight into an industry that simply took the audiences breath away when it launched onto the world stage during the latter part of the 19th century. For a more in-depth study of Japanese textiles, I would absolutely recommend "Threads of Silk and Gold" a pioneering study that accompanied the first ever textile exhibition held outside of Japan, curated by Clare Pollard at the Ashmolean Museum in 2012.

Provenance:

Eminent Australian collection.

Previously featured: Plate 21, Malcolm Fairley Japanese Works of Art exhibition catalogue, November 2013.

Condition report:

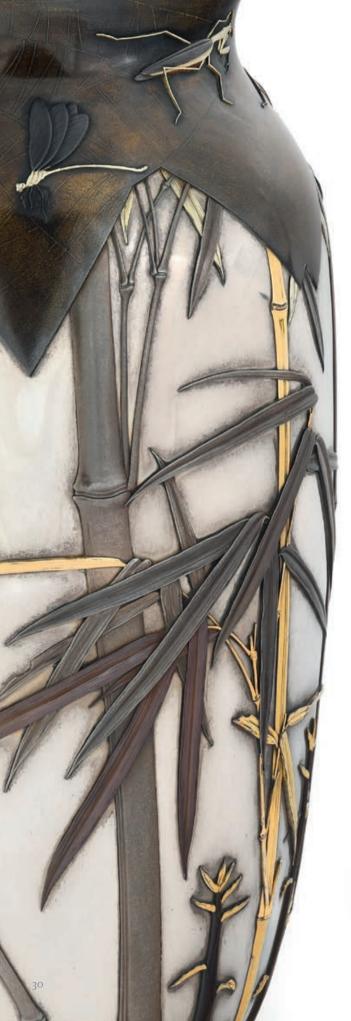
Fine condition throughout with minimal signs of fading or losses.

Approximate sizes:

Height: 67 1/4" 171 cm **Width:** 103 1/2" 263 cm







11 MIXED METAL VASE

Artist – Suzuki Chokichi (attributed) Company – Kiritsu Kosho Kaisha



As part of our Japanese works of art exhibition, I am delighted to offer this incredibly scarce Meiji period (1868-1912) silver and mixed metal vase, produced at the Kiritsu Kosho Kaisha almost certainly under the directorship of lead artist Suzuki Chokichi (1848-1919). The main body of this large and heavy silver vase is predominantly decorated with sprigs of bamboo formed from alloys including shibuichi, shakudo, copper and gold, nothing too unusual there, however the shoulders give rise to a more complex use of alloys and a style more typical of Kako's extravagant designs. A striking and guite radical angular alloy is overlaid onto the silver body, this unique olive green textured alloy has been painstakingly etched back to reveal a very fine cobweb in low relief. This most unusual decoration is adorned with an array of spectacular quality mixed metal insects to include moths, spiders, dragonfly, praying mantis and locust to name a few, each insect manufactured from alloys including gold, silver, shibuichi and shakudo. A most dramatic and quite remarkable display of craftsmanship that is likely to have been produced by Chokichi during his tenure as lead artist at the government owned and sponsored Kiritsu Kosho Kaisha, during the mid Meiji period, certainly prior to 1891 and the cessation of the company. The underside of the vase is signed Kiritsu Kosha Kaisha Sei under the trademark double mountain mark and is most unusually accompanied by a further silver mark "Tsuka Gin". see literature.





Literature:

The most unusual accompanying silver mark "Tsuka gin" literally denotes silver used or issued by the government mint, which of course would tie in with the government owned Kiritsu Kosho Kaisha, who would certainly have had direct access to the mint. The new Meiji period coinage was first produced at the opening of the mint in Osaka in 1871 using western techniques never before seen in Japan. At this time only Yen coinage was produced with no banknotes in production, "Yen" literally meaning small round object. It is recorded that the mint also produced medals of honour and rather interestingly, silver artworks.

Although it is evident that our silver vase was produced by the Kiritsu Kosho Kaisha, there was clearly a collaboration with the Imperial Mint at Osaka, we may never know the exact involvement of the mint other than to perhaps provide the uncirculated silver to further the manufacture of such lavish objects as this. During the mid-1870's, production of silver Yen was stalled at the mint, the reason was to produce new coinage containing a percentage of gold in order to align trade with the fast emerging US and Mexican markets which both used gold coinage. This hiatus created a surplus of uncirculated silver Yen that we may assume were smelted for other manufacturing purposes.

Despite extensive ongoing research and decades of handling and viewing all manner of pieces produced by Chokichi and the Kiritsu Kosho Kaisha Company, I cannot trace any other metalwork object manufactured predominantly with the use of silver and certainly not with the use of the Imperial mint mark. As such, this vase represents a very rare and important example from the mid Meiji period of manufacture.



USA collection.

Condition report:

Fine condition.

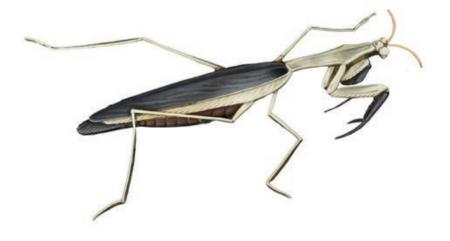
Approximate sizes:

 Height:
 14 1/8"
 36 cm

 Diameter:
 7"
 18 cm

 Weight:
 127 oz
 3,970 gms









12 IRON TABLE BOX

Artist - Inoue of Kyoto



A very fine quality mixed metal table box from the studios of the Inoue Company of Kyoto. The lid to this mystical iron box is inset with a shibuichi panel decorated with a most unusual scene of Tennin, a beautiful Buddhistic angel. On this occasion Tennin is portrayed playing a drum whilst seemingly floating amidst clouds, her lavish dress and hair ornaments decorated in very fine detail, her clothing usually of five colours according to Chinese tradition. The sides of the box are decorated with sumptuous gold damascene diaper patterns, lifting the lid reveals a gilt lined interior. Most unusually, the underside is further decorated with delicate wirework around the silver company seal, all supported on bracket feet. This is truly a very special box from the higher echelons of this company's output.

Provenance:

UK Gentleman's collection.

Condition report:

Very good throughout.

Approximate sizes:

Height:2 3/8"6.0 cmWidth:5 1/4"13.3 cmDepth:3 3/4"9.5 cm





13 PURE SILVER LIDDED BOX

Artist - Sekiguchi Shinya (1877-1932)



A most unusual late Meiji period (1868-1912), early Taisho period (1912-1926) pure silver and mixed metal lidded box by the highly regarded artist Sekiguchi Shinya, his art name Chitokusai. This delightful box is manufactured from pure silver and stands upon bracket feet, the shibuichi and mixed metal lid is most unusually decorated with Japanese marine life including seaweed, shells, molluscs, starfish and a hermit crab. A simple yet poignant snapshot of everyday staple foods that surrounded these shores, now brilliantly portrayed by an artist that would have likely enjoyed some of these seafoods as part of his diet. The lid bears an inscription that reads Shinya Koku (carved by Shinya) aside a Shinya seal. A most charming box manufactured by a highly regarded and well recorded artist of the Meiji/ Taisho period.

Literature:

Sekiguchi Shinya was born in Tokyo as the son of the celebrated metalworker Sekiguchi Ichiya, who himself was under the tutelage of Goto Ichijo (1791-1876). He worked alongside his father from the age of 14 and first exhibited in 1895 at the fourth Naikoku Kangyo Hakurankai (National Industrial Exposition) aged just 18. His works are also recorded in the catalogues of the 1900 Paris Exhibition and of the fifth National Industrial Exposition (1903).

Provenance:

lapanese collection.

Previously exhibited at the Kiyomizu Sannenzaka Museum, Kyoto.

Condition report:

Fine condition throughout.

Approximate sizes:

 Height:
 1 3/4"
 4.5 cm

 Width:
 5 1/2"
 14 cm

 Depth:
 4 3/8"
 11 cm

 Weight:
 736 gms
 23.6 oz







14 IRON OKIMONO

Artist – Unno Shomin (1844-1915)



An incredibly rare late Edo period (1615-1868) iron okimono by Unno Shomin (1844-1915). The serene sculpture depicts Monju Bosatsu clutching a detachable silver sceptre whilst seated upon a large lion dog. His body adorned with gold jewels, the shishi's eyes of gilt with black pupils. The okimono's base inset with a silver plaque, signed in chiselled characters "Suifu no ju Unno Motohira saku" (made by Unno Motohira in Mito). The okimono fits snugly within its original tomobako, the tomobako inscription reads, "Monju Bosatsu okimono", the inside of the lid inscribed "Monju Bosatsu no zu tetsu okimono, Unno Shomin sensei Mito zaiju seinenki no saku Motohira zaimei" (Iron okimono of Monju Bosatsu made by Master Unno Shomin when he was young and living in Mito, with signature Motohira) also signed "Hakuzanshi Toyokawa Mitsunaga no sho" certified by Hakuzanshi Toyokawa Mitsunaga, (probably II) with two seals "Hakuzanshi" and "Shinryusai".

Literature:

Unno Shomin is perhaps the most famous of the generation of metalworkers who started their careers in the swordfitting workshops of the Mito fief, 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 two swords was revoked in 1876. Shomin threw himself into the development of new types of products for both Japanese and

international customers, he exhibited frequently at expositions inside and outside of Japan, served as a professor at Tokyo Art School and in 1896 was appointed to the order of Teishitsu Gigei-in (Imperial Household artist).

Toyokawa Mitsunaga II (1851-1923) was a Tokyo metalworker who excelled at making kozuka and menuki using the takabori technique.

Provenance:

Private Japanese collection.

Previously see: Bonhams London, Fine Japanese art, 14th May 2015 - Lot 448.

Condition report:

Lovely original condition throughout.

Approximate sizes:

Height: 5 1/2" 14 cm **Width:** 7" 17.7 cm







15 GOLD CIGARETTE CASE

Artist – Unno Shomin (1844-1915)



We are delighted to offer this incredibly rare 18ct gold cigarette case by arguably the most famous metalworker of the period, Unno Shomin (1844-1915). Here Shomin has skilfully chiselled a scene of a boat upon a lake within a mountainous backdrop, to the shore a pavilion rests upon a rocky outcrop beneath the pine trees. Shomin has utilised angled chisels in a technique referred to as Katakiribori to simply represent ink brush painting of the Edo period. The case comes complete with its original retailer's box bearing a label that translates to a shop in Tokyo called Sanoya, Nihonbashi Ningyo-cho, Telephone: (66) 0481. A fine example of gold metalwork from one of only a handful of Imperial artists of the period.

Literature:

See plate 14.

Provenance:

Japanese collection.

Condition report:

Very fine condition.

Approximate sizes:

 Height:
 3 1/8"
 8 cm

 Width:
 3 1/2"
 9 cm

 Weight:
 126.4gms







16 SILVER FLOWER VASES

Artist – Kobayashi Shoun Company – Shobido Company





A most appealing pair of Meiji period (1868-1912) pure silver mixed metal vases, each fully artist signed and bearing the Shobido Company seal. The finely worked vases decorated with highly sought after winter scenes of birds in snowy landscapes and waterside settings. The left-hand vase depicts ducks in flight within a backdrop of snow covered foliage, the opposing vase depicts a group of ducks upon a snow covered lakeside bank, each vase finely chiselled by the recorded Meiji period artist, Kobayashi Shoun. The engraved signature on the vases reads "Shoun koku" (engraved by Shoun), whilst the underside of each vase is sealed by the Shobido Company.

The vases come complete within their original tomobako storage box, itself inscribed "Hakugin kabin, kacho koku, ittsui" translating to read (a pair of white silver vases with the design of birds and flowers).

Literature:

The recorded artist is Kobayashi Shoun (active during the Meiji and Taisho periods). He studied under Yamaguchi Issho (Yamaguchi Katsuteru, 1876 -?) who studied under Kagawa Katsuhiro (1853-1917) an Imperial Craftsman.

The Shobido Company were based in Osaka, recorded as trading from 1900 as jewellers and retailers of silverware and other works of art.

Provenance:

USA collection.

Condition report:

Very fine condition throughout.

Approximate sizes:

 Height:
 12"
 31 cm

 Diameter:
 6"
 15.5 cm

 Weight:
 78 oz
 2440 gms









17 MIXED METAL JARDINIERE

Artist – Suzuki Chokichi (attributed) Company – Kiritsu Kosho Kaisha



A most charming Meiji period mixed metal jardiniere, manufactured at the Kiritsu Kosho Kaisha, undoubtedly under the directorship of the highly acclaimed Imperial artist Suzuki Chokichi (1848-1919). On this occasion Chokichi has manufactured a heavy gauge bronze and mixed metal jardiniere that simply captures an exotic bird resting upon bamboos. The body of the planter further decorated with chrysanthemums amidst vibrant mixed metal foliage, work instantly recognisable as that of Chokichi's output, the shoulders and base bordered with geometric bands of mixed metal moths.

The underside carries the double mountain mark of the Kiritsu Kosho Kaisha, the government sponsored first manufacturing company where Chokichi worked as designer and lead artist until its closure in 1891.

Artist literature:

See plate 10.

Provenance:

USA collection.

Condition report:

Fine condition throughout.

Approximate sizes:

Height: 10 1/4" 26 cm **Diameter:** 12" 30.5 cm

18 MIXED METAL VASE

Artist – Suzuki Chokichi (attributed) Company – Kiritsu Kosho Kaisha



A striking bronze and mixed metal vase from the studios of the Kiritsu Kosho Kaisha (Governments first sponsored manufacturing company) a company at this time headed up by the highly regarded Suzuki Chokichi, his art name Kako. There can be little doubt that this vase was manufactured under the directorship of Kako, from the almost crusty archaic style of the autumnal patination to the incredible artistry of the dragonfly landing upon the lilies, this vase screams Chokichi in every respect.

The main theme of a dragonfly landing upon a lily is crafted in meticulous detail, from the blueish black almost iridescent shakudo on silver to the vibrantly coloured leaves, each leaf reeded and patinated to give a wonderful contrast to the background. This quite simple Japanese taste continues around the entire circumference of this incredibly heavy gauge vase. The underside bears the full signature and double mountain mark of the company that ceased production in 1891.

Provenance:

USA collection.

Condition report:

Exceptional condition throughout.

Approximate sizes:

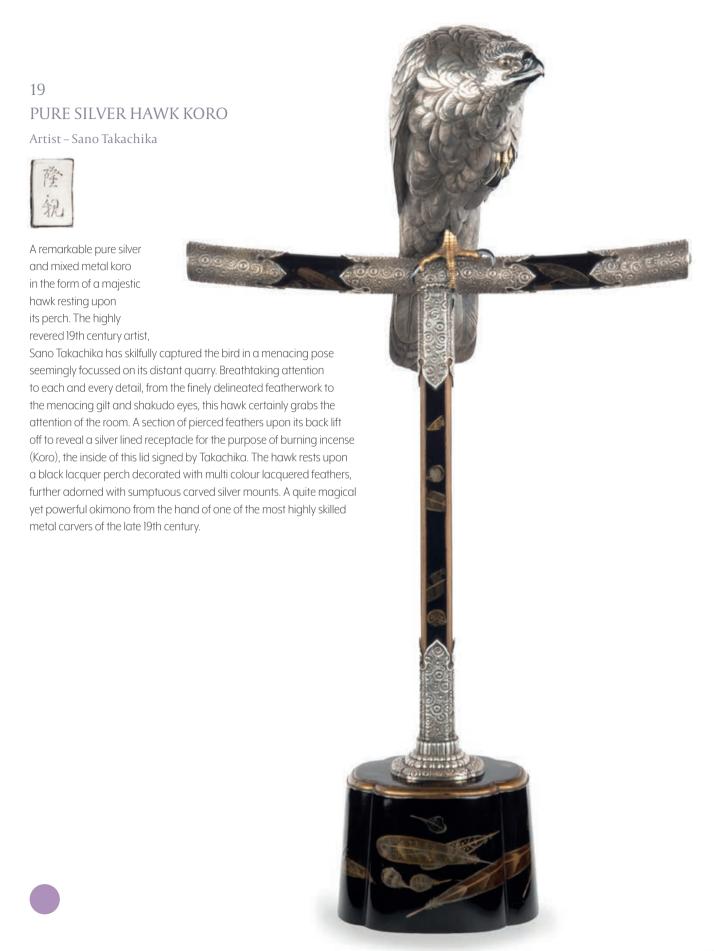
Height: 12 3/8" 31.5 cm **Diameter:** 7 1/8" 18 cm

Weight: 3.7 kg









Provenance:

Esteemed Australian collection.

Literature:

Only a few examples of Koro by this artist are recorded in major worldwide collections, two examples can be found in the Khalili collection, Meiji No Takara Treasures of Imperial Japan.

Metalwork volume II, Plate 120 displays a silver hawk koro on perch very similar to this example, Plate 121 shows a very similar quality multi metal decorated pigeon Koro, the volume also mentions that a snake and eagle Koro on a tree trunk is recorded in the well-known collection of Michael Tomkinson at plate 72.

The artist Sano Takachika was a master of hammering, metal carving and chiselling and a recorded member of the Tokyo Chokokai (Tokyo association of carvers and sculptors) He is known to have exhibited at many of the expositions of the period including the Japan Art Society spring exhibition of 1894, where he exhibited gold and silver figures of a heron and a crow.

Condition report:

The silver hawk and lacquer stand are in very fine condition.

Approximate sizes:

Height: 24 1/4" 61.5 cm **Width:** 13 1/2" 34.5 cm







20

CLOISONNE ENAMEL INCENSE BURNER

Artist – Hayashi Tanigoro (attributed)

A very fine late Meiji period cloisonne enamel Koro (incense burner). The Koro takes the form of an eighteen-petal chrysanthemum standing upon vibrant turquoise enamel leaf shaped feet. The vessels lobed petals are decorated in a soft lilac enamel rising to a pale grey, each petal worked with vertical gold wires. The domed and pierced cover finely executed as the flower's central stamens, decorated in green and yellow enamels within circular gold wire cloisons.

The delightful finial is formed as a mixed metal butterfly worked in silver, gold and shakudo, lifting the lid reveals a silver liner for the purpose of incense.

Literature:

Though unsigned, it is possible that this Koro was manufactured by Hayashi Tanigoro, a Meiji period artist working in Nagoya and recorded as manufacturing unique one-off pieces, sometimes working on commission for the Ando Company.

Provenance:

Private USA collection.

Condition report:

Fine condition throughout.

Approximate sizes:

Height: 2 1/4" 6 cm **Diameter:** 2 3/4" 7 cm





21 Bronze Heron Okimono

Artist – Genryusai Seiya



A large most captivating bronze study of a Heron perched high upon a root wood base. The prolific animalia artist Genryusai Seiya has perfectly captured a most majestic study of this native bird gazing down at crabs clambering upon the root wood base, here representing a rocky outcrop. The large elegant bird is highlighted with gilt and shakudo eyes, its feathers finely worked to an exacting standard, the two bronze crustaceans it seemingly craves are patinated in silver and red alloys. The artist seal translates to read "Genryusai Seiya Sei" and is located beneath the tail feathers.

Literature:

In Japanese mythology and folklore, egrets and herons, often grouped together under the term sagi, are symbols of peace, natural beauty and elegance, and are often associated with values like freedom and grace. They can also represent enlightenment, sacredness and good fortune and are often seen as messengers of the Gods.

Provenance:

European private collection.

Condition report:

Very good throughout.

Approximate sizes (overall):

 Height:
 32"
 81.5 cm

 Width:
 16"
 41 cm

 Depth:
 10"
 25 cm





22

GOLD LACQUER SHODANA

As part of this year's collection we are delighted to offer this finely decorated Meiji Period (1868-1912) hardwood display cabinet (Shodana). This dense native hardwood cabinet has been designed to house a combination of sumptuous gold lacquer doors and drawers within the carved and pierced main carcass. Two of the main doors curved adding to the complexity whilst others slide on runners.

A fascinating array of scenes are brought to life with the clever use of lacquer and Shibayama decoration to the door and drawer fronts, unusually including a swordsmith at work, demons, jovial bands of musicians. Fans and birds within traditional ikebana displays form the basis of decoration for the remainder.

The shelves are further decorated with complex fretwork depicting ivory birds in flight amidst mother of pearl prunus blossom, with fine ivory shi shi acting as guardians. The remainder of the carcass either blind fret carved or once again gold lacquer decorated to an exceptional standard.

Condition report:

Expertly cleaned, restored and waxed ready for immediate home display. This cabinet comes in two parts for ease of transportation and is of a size that will sit comfortably within most room settings.

Approximate Sizes:

 Height:
 76 1/2"
 194 cm

 Width:
 52"
 132 cm

 Defra licence number:
 NW3A7||B











23 MIXED METAL VASE

Artist – Suzuki Katsuhiro (1827-1886) Company – Ozeki





A most unusual shibuichi trumpet shaped vase of slender proportions set upon a gold wire decorated shakudo base. The highly skilled artist, Katsuhiro has captured the playful scene of two Oni clambering up the body of the vase attempting to catch the legendary character Okame. One of the two mythical beast acts as a support for the other to climb upon in their quest to reach the evasive Okame, each of the three characters manufactured from mixed metals to an exacting standard as one would expect from an Ozeki retained artist. The central tapered section of the vase is further decorated in sumptuous vibrant enamels of various designs within gold wire cloisons.

This incredible vase is fully artist signed and carries the all-important Ozeki seal to the underside. A most extraordinary combination of techniques resulting in a humorous yet very serious and scarce piece of mid Meiji period metalwork.

Literature:

A similar shakudo example of this very scarce vase is recorded in: The Hartman collection of Japanese Metalwork, Christies South Kensington, July 1st 1976, Lot 676 was the final lot of that sale. That example was not signed by Katsuhiro but does bear the Ozeki Company seal, this would lead me to conclude that the design was possibly that of Ozeki Sadajiro. At the time of writing I am aware of only three known examples.



This artist was one of two sons of the luminary craftsman Hagiya Katsuhira (1804-1886), one of the leading metalworkers of the Edo/Meiji period. Born in 1804 as Terakado Yasuke, he took his name from a combination of the Mito masters who taught him and subsequently went on to become one of the most eminent Mito school artists and tutors, he went on to teach such famous artists and Unno Shomin and Kano Natsuo amongst others, with many of his works now residing in the worlds most recognized museums and collections.

One of his two sons Suzuki Katsuhiro achieved the status of head craftsman to the Suzuki family and thus adopted their name. Hagiya died in 1886 at the age of 83, remarkably his son Suzuki Katsuhiro died a month earlier, aged just 48.

It is an absolute privilege to be able to showcase another of his rare masterpieces in this year's exhibition catalogue.

Condition report:

Very good condition throughout.

Approximate sizes:

Height: 11" 28 cm **Diameter:** 2 1/2" 6.3 cm









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