

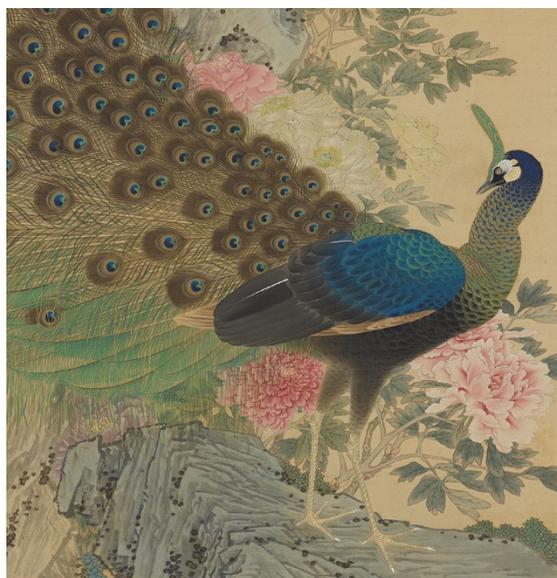
Harvard Art Museums

Fogg Museum
Busch-Reisinger Museum
Arthur M. Sackler Museum

Press Release

Harvard Art Museums Present *Painting Edo: Japanese Art from the Feinberg Collection*

Exhibition is first extensive presentation of the collection since it was promised to the museums by Robert and Betsy Feinberg



Maruyama Ōkyo, *Peacock and Peonies* (detail), Japanese, Edo period, 1768. Hanging scroll; ink, color, and gold on silk. Promised gift of Robert S. and Betsy G. Feinberg, [IL42147.17](#). Photo: John Tsantes and Neil Greentree; © Robert Feinberg.

Cambridge, MA
February 3, 2020

Beginning February 14, 2020, the Harvard Art Museums present *Painting Edo: Japanese Art from the Feinberg Collection*, a special exhibition of more than 120 of the finest works from the preeminent collection of Robert S. (Harvard class of 1961) and Betsy G. Feinberg; the exhibition runs through July 26, 2020. *Painting Edo* offers a window onto the supremely rich visual culture of Japan's early modern era and explores how the Edo period (1615–1868), and the city of Edo (present-day Tokyo), expressed itself during a time of artistic renaissance. A striking array of paintings in all the major formats will be on display—hanging scrolls, folding screens, sliding doors, fan paintings, and woodblock-printed books,

among others—from virtually every stylistic lineage of the era, telling a comprehensive story of Edo painting on its own terms.

Painting Edo, organized by the Harvard Art Museums, is co-curated by [Rachel Saunders](#), the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Curator of Asian Art at the Harvard Art Museums, and [Yukio Lippit](#), the Jeffrey T. Chambers and Andrea Okamura Professor of History of Art and Architecture at Harvard University. The exhibition will be on view exclusively at the Harvard Art Museums; an [illustrated publication](#) by Saunders and Lippit accompanies the show.

“*Painting Edo* is one of the largest exhibitions ever presented at the Harvard Art Museums—and fittingly so, since the Feinberg Collection is one of the largest gifts of art ever promised to this institution,” said Martha Tedeschi, the Elizabeth and John Moors Cabot Director of the Harvard Art Museums. “We are immensely grateful to the Feinbergs, whose great care and vision will ensure that the beauty and material ingenuity of these works reach viewers today and for generations to come.”

Robert S. and Betsy G. Feinberg generously [promised their collection](#) of more than 300 works of Japanese art to the Harvard Art Museums in 2013. Judiciously assembled over nearly fifty years, the collection—the finest private collection of Edo period Japanese painting in the United States—offers an exceptional opportunity to explore continuities and disruptions in artistic practice in early modern Japan. The museums’ stewardship of the collection ensures access by students, faculty, scholars, and the public, and allows for teaching, research, and further documentation of these important works.

The Feinberg Collection is notable not only for its size and remarkable quality, but also for its comprehensiveness. It comprises representative paintings from virtually every stylistic lineage of the era: from the gorgeous decorative works of the Rinpa School to the luminous clarity of the Maruyama-Shijō School, from the monochromatic indexes of interiority of so-called Nanga, or Southern School, painting to the actors and courtesans of the pleasure quarters depicted in ukiyo-e, to the inky innovations of the so-called eccentrics. A [complete catalogue](#) of the Feinberg Collection will be published by the museums in late Summer 2020.

Over the last five years, since the museums reopened in 2014, select objects from the Feinberg Collection have been on display in extended thematic installations in the East Asian gallery on Level 2. The rotating presentation of these works was designed not only to introduce strengths of the collection to visitors, but also to broaden access for teaching and research. These initial installations provided a preview of the amazing range of works now united in the powerhouse *Painting Edo* exhibition.

“I had the pleasure of meeting the Feinbergs and viewing their collection for the first time in the late 1990s while I was a student,” said Professor Lippit. “That experience gave me an appreciation for the study of new objects and cultural histories, and since becoming a faculty member at Harvard I have been actively teaching with the Feinberg Collection, inviting students to view and discuss the paintings.”

Painting Edo begins in the Special Exhibitions Gallery on Level 3 and expands into three adjacent galleries typically reserved for installations that support university coursework. This is the first time the museums mount a single exhibition across all four spaces. Visitors are greeted by Tani Bunchō’s [Grasses and Moon](#) (1817), a large painting that encapsulates the Japanese tradition of moon-viewing, before being immediately enveloped by Sakai Hōitsu’s [Birds and Flowers of the Twelve Months](#) (c. 1820–28), a stunning group of 12 hanging scrolls that together create a paradisaical garden in which all the seasons flower simultaneously. From this introductory gallery, visitors are encouraged to wander at will to discover the major schools and styles of painting. Galleries are organized to reflect Edo period conceptions of lineage, offering a view of how “Edo” was articulated by and for its own creators and consumers.

“The Feinbergs have collected so carefully and with such dedication over the years that they have formed a truly comprehensive collection,” said Saunders. “That is particularly significant for us as a teaching museum because it allows us to look at the whole gamut of Edo painting within the exhibition, including virtually every major lineage and painting format.”

Other highlights include:

Maruyama Ōkyo’s *Peacock and Peonies* (1768), a hanging scroll with a resplendent peacock rendered with Western-style anatomical precision against a luxuriant background of peonies [Intro section]

A Portuguese Trading Ship Arrives in Japan (17th century), a pair of six-panel folding screens that depicts the arrival of a ship into port and the procession of its captain into town, an annual voyage made by the Portuguese to trade silver, silks, and spices [Floating Worlds section]

Tawaraya Sōri’s *Autumn Maple Trees* (second half 18th century), one of only a handful of works that survive by the artist and widely regarded as his masterpiece [School of Kōrin section]

Ikeno Taiga’s *The Poet Su Shi and Meng Jia Loses His Hat* (18th century), a pair of six-panel folding screens depicting two renowned figures in acts of elegant disregard for societal norms [Eccentricity section]

Lotus in Autumn (1872), a wildly brushed hanging scroll by the female artist Okuhara Seiko, whose Chinese-style ink paintings became hugely popular in the years immediately following the Meiji Restoration of 1868, a time that ushered in Japan’s modern era [Remembering Edo section]

Twenty fans by Suzuki Kiitsu, displayed against a deep blue backdrop, evoking the moment at the end of summer when Japanese men and women would cast their used fans into the river in celebration of the arrival of autumn [Remembering Edo section]

A rotation of select exhibition objects will take place between May 4 and 7 to preserve light-sensitive works as well as to add other fine examples of painting. Galleries will remain open to the public on these dates.

Learn more and view a slideshow of objects at harvardartmuseums.org/paintingedo. The museums invite visitors to use #PaintingEdo and #HarvardArtMuseums to tag their posts on social media platforms.

Publications

Two catalogues will be released in conjunction with the exhibition, both published by the Harvard Art Museums and distributed by Yale University Press.

The first, *Painting Edo: Selections from the Feinberg Collection of Japanese Art*, is a companion to the exhibition; it offers a sweeping and lavishly illustrated overview of a transformative era in Japanese art-making as told through superb examples from the finest private collection of Edo period painting in the United States. Includes essays by Rachel Saunders and Yukio Lippitt. Hardcover, \$35.

The second book, a comprehensive *Catalogue of the Feinberg Collection of Japanese Art*, will be published in late Summer 2020. Edited by Rachel Saunders, the volume includes new photography and commentary from a range of authors on each of the more than 300 works in the Feinberg Collection. Hardcover, \$65.

Press Preview

A preview of *Painting Edo* will be held for members of the press on Monday, February 10, 2020, at 3:30pm. **RSVP required by Friday, February 7**; please contact Jennifer Aubin (jennifer_aubin@harvard.edu or 617-496-5331) to register.

Public Programming

The Harvard Art Museums will bring the exhibition to life through a robust lineup of public programs. All events, unless noted, are held at the Harvard Art Museums, 32 Quincy Street, Cambridge, MA 02138. Questions? Call 617-495-9400. For updates and details, please see our calendar: harvardartmuseums.org/calendar.

The opening celebration will be held on Thursday, February 13, from 5 to 9pm. Free and open to all, the event will combine a lecture in the museums' Menschel Hall with a reception in the Calderwood Courtyard; all museum galleries will be open for the duration of the event. The lecture will feature Timon Screech, professor of art history at SOAS University of London, who will present the lecture "Into the Kaleidoscope: Painting in Edo Japan." Curator Rachel Saunders and professor Yukio Lippit will offer a brief introduction to the exhibition before the lecture. Tickets to the lecture portion of the evening are required, and can be acquired in person, by phone, or online for a small fee through the Harvard Box Office, beginning at noon on Tuesday, February 4. Limit of two tickets per person.

A public symposium will be held on Thursday, March 19, from 1 to 5pm in Menschel Hall. In a lively debate-style format, scholars will engage six key works from the Feinberg Collection. Free admission, but seating is limited. Doors open at 12:30pm; please use the museums' Broadway entrance.

During ARTS FIRST, a public campus-wide celebration of the arts at Harvard held April 30 to May 3, and throughout the run of the exhibition, the museums will offer opportunities for visitors to engage with the artistic and cultural traditions represented in the exhibition, including fan-making workshops in the Materials Lab and tea ceremonies hosted in partnership with GSTea, an organization at Harvard's Graduate School of Design that celebrates global tea traditions.

The museums will also partner with Harvard's Arnold Arboretum on a series of specialized walking tours that will connect species in the arboretum's rich landscape with those depicted in the exhibition.

Finally, as part of a wide range of events held on campus during Harvard Commencement week, Rachel Saunders will give a lecture about her research for the exhibition and its accompanying publications. The lecture will take place on Tuesday, May 26, from 3 to 4:30pm in Menschel Hall. Free admission, but seating is limited. Tickets will be distributed beginning at 3:30pm at the museums' Broadway entrance. One ticket per person.

Gallery talks and tours will also be offered throughout the exhibition by curators, fellows, and other contributors, offering an in-depth overview of the exhibition themes as well as a closer look at individual artists and works. Use the calendar link above to find details on dates, times, and topics.

Credits

Painting Edo: Japanese Art from the Feinberg Collection was made possible by the Robert H. Ellsworth Bequest to the Harvard Art Museums, the Melvin R. Seiden and Janine Luke Fund for Publications and Exhibitions, the Catalogues and Exhibitions Fund for Pre-Twentieth-Century Art of the Fogg Museum, the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation, the Thierry Porté Director's Discretionary Fund for Japanese Art, and the Japan Foundation. The accompanying print catalogues were supported by the Harvard Art Museums Mellon Publication Funds, including the Henry P. McIlhenny Fund. Related programming is supported by the M. Victor Leventritt Lecture Series Endowment Fund, Harvard

University's Edwin O. Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies, and the Department of History of Art and Architecture Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund for Art and Architecture.

About the Harvard Art Museums

The Harvard Art Museums house one of the largest and most renowned art collections in the United States, and are comprised of three museums (the Fogg, Busch-Reisinger, and Arthur M. Sackler Museums) and four research centers (the Straus Center for Conservation and Technical Studies, the Center for the Technical Study of Modern Art, the Harvard Art Museums Archives, and the Archaeological Exploration of Sardis). The Fogg Museum includes Western art from the Middle Ages to the present; the Busch-Reisinger Museum, unique among North American museums, is dedicated to the study of all modes and periods of art from central and northern Europe, with an emphasis on German-speaking countries; and the Arthur M. Sackler Museum is focused on Asian art, Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern art, and Islamic and later Indian art. Together, the collections include approximately 250,000 objects in all media. The Harvard Art Museums are distinguished by the range and depth of their collections, their groundbreaking exhibitions, and the original research of their staff. Integral to Harvard University and the wider community, the museums and research centers serve as resources for students, scholars, and the public. For more than a century they have been the nation's premier training ground for museum professionals and are renowned for their seminal role in developing the discipline of art history in the United States. The Harvard Art Museums have a rich tradition of considering the history of objects as an integral part of the teaching and study of art history, focusing on conservation and preservation concerns as well as technical studies.

harvardartmuseums.org

The Harvard Art Museums receive support from the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

Hours and Admission

Open daily, 10am–5pm; closed major holidays. Admission: \$20 adults, \$18 seniors (65+). Free for members; all students (with valid ID); youth under 18; Cambridge residents (proof of residency required); Harvard ID holders (plus one guest); active duty military personnel (NEA Blue Star Museums); and individuals with SNAP benefits or an EBT card. On Saturdays, from 10am–noon, Massachusetts residents receive free admission (proof of residency required). For further information about visiting, see harvardartmuseums.org/visit.

For more information, please contact

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